Samuel Duncan Sirrine and Achilles

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INTRODUCTION

While writing a biography of Mephibosheth Sirrine, the older brother of my 2nd great grandfather, George Warren Sirrine, I came across an entry in the Missionary Registers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints listing Isaac Sirrine and Sarah Garrison as the elder's parents. Thinking that the reference was linked to Mephibosheth, an important, if not famous, early Mormon missionary, I was shocked to see that the missionary on the record was his little brother Samuel Duncan Sirrine. I had no idea that Samuel was even a Mormon, let alone a missionary. During a year of research on his two older brothers I had learned virtually nothing of Samuel, and there was little more to be found in either Ancestry.com or FamilySearch.org but the image of a Mexican War service pension application, which someone had attached in FamilySearch.

My interest piqued, I clicked on that image and found that behind it was a 28-page legal document containing some details of his war experience and an investigation of his four marriages, which had been submitted to transfer his pension payments to his widow, Mary L. Miller. Interesting. Then I searched on his name in newspapers of his time[1] and found scores of hits, especially in the warring Mormon and anti-Mormon papers of the mid-1800s. He was associated with the "Danites" and the infamous Orrin Porter Rockwell. And one of those articles[2] named him as Achilles, the pseudonymous author of an expose on Mormonism.[3] That news article had been picked up by Harold Schindler, the most prominent biographer of Orrin Porter Rockwell and mentioned in the introduction to his second edition.[4] In his excellent review of Schindler's book, BYU professor Richard H. Cracroft wrote:

> Schindler leaves the door open for further research. For example, he has been able to identify Samuel D. Serrine (sic) as "Achilles" (xi,xv), Rockwell's sensational defamer, but he has been unable to uncover, except for the appearance of Serrine's name on sundry lists or committees, any further facts about him.[5]

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[1] Utah Digital Newspapers.

[2] *Salt Lake Herald-Republican,* August 6, 1878.

[3] *The Destroying Angels of Mormondom: or, a Sketch of the Life of Orrin Porter Rockwell, the late Danite Chief,* by Achilles (Thos. Gardner), San Francisco, 1878.

[4] Harold Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, University of Utah Press, 1966, p. 11.

[5] BYU Studies Quarterly, 1984, Volume 24, Issue 3, Article 14.

Well, for me the challenge was on. I already love writing about my relatives, further facts on Samuel D. Sirrine are needed in the academic world, and I have discovered a trove of unchecked clues.

This book has been an interesting journey. Samuel is not mentioned in the biographies of any of his family members--I don't even have a photograph of him. But much of his life can be pieced together through newspapers and traditional genealogy investigation, especially of his siblings and wives.

I had little idea that I would fall into the contentious morass of opinions in the literature of western violence and the involvement of the Mormon Church. While I have no ambition to address that issue fully, I hope to define Samuel Sirrine's role in it, and possibly add a new thought or two. My intent is to establish whether Samuel really was Achilles by comparing Achilles' claims to the known facts of Samuel's life. What could he have known first hand (or at least second hand)? Which claims of Achilles match Samuel's experience and which ones contradict or occurred outside of it?

In addition to clarifying Samuel's relationship to Achilles, I want to research Samuel's life as accurately as possible. Even after my effort many gaps remain. This is partly because Samuel left no writings, nor did his family write of him. And much of my information comes from newspapers, which at that time were (if you can imagine it!) more opinionated and less reliable than today's journalism. Where gaps and contradictions occur, I will offer my own theories, but attempt to clearly label them as such.

Finally, I want to share a good story.

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CHAPTER ONE – EARLY LIFE

The first recorded event of Samuel Sirrine's life was seared into his brain, although he was too young to retain a conscious memory of it. On Christmas Eve, 1826, while his parents and teenage brothers were visiting relatives, the Sirrine cabin burned to the ground. When his 11 year old brother Joel discovered that the fire had breached the fireplace, he scrambled to rush his six younger siblings out into the freezing darkness, but four year old Isaac and his infant brother Benjamin died in the cabin. Joel succumbed a short time later from his burns.

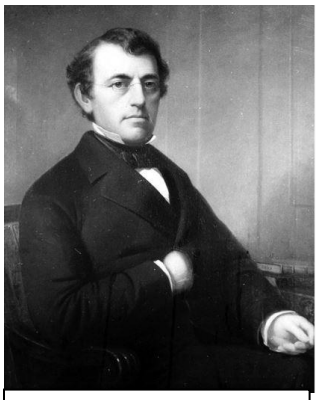
Samuel was 18 months old. He had been born in that cabin on April 10, 1825, one of 11 children of Isaac and Sarah Garrison Sirrine, who had moved west two winters earlier on a horse-drawn sleigh, hoping for a new start. Three generations of Sirrines had lived in Philipstown Township in Dutchess (later Putnam) County, New York before Samuel's parents set out in January of 1824 for Hector Township, which lay between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes about 22 miles south of Fayette. Sarah's father, Revolutionary War veteran Abraham Garrison, had moved there from Philipstown with his extended family between 1808 and 1815, and the Sirrines eventually followed them. When the Erie Canal opened in October of 1825 the region boomed with business as hordes of travelers headed through from New England to Western New York and via the Great Lakes to Ohio and the newly opened Michigan Territory, which could now be reached entirely by water.

According to their family stories, Isaac and Sarah were too stricken by the calamity of the fire to rebuild the house, and were soon on their way back to their previous home in the Catskills where the Hudson River bends around West Point. They had lost a daughter in infancy a year before the blaze. The older boys, Abraham, John, Seth, and Mephibosheth remained in Hector, so the parents departed with only three children: George Warren, age eight, Hannah Frances, their five year old only-remaining daughter, and Samuel, now the youngest.

Samuel's oldest brother Abraham was 18 when the family left and never moved from Hector for the rest of his life. John, the next oldest, immediately took a trip to Michigan with his younger brother Seth to establish a homestead, but according to John's biographer,[6] they eventually joined the family in Putnam County in 1829, where they learned the carpenter's trade from their father. After getting married in Putnam County, John worked as a carpenter in New York City between 1835 and 1848, except for two more years in Michigan to prove up and sell his property. The other brother, Mephibosheth, was not a carpenter. He left Hector as a young adult, married a young woman in Michigan named Mariah Wheeler, and in 1836 and 1837 was living in New York City, listed in the

[6] Laura Rudy, *The Trumansburg Free Press and Sentinel*, January 15, 1936.

directory as a carpet weaver, but that was soon to change. In Philipstown, Samuel Sirrine's father Isaac specialized in the building of mills. It is said that he produced many mills up and down the Hudson River from Philipstown, including some in New York City.



Robert Parrott

As far as I know, I am writing the first and only biography of Samuel, so we will have to imagine much of his youth through inference, relying on the biographies of two of his older brothers. Warren LeRoy Sirrine, the son and biographer of Samuel's closest older brother, George Warren Sirrine, confirmed that Isaac trained his boys in carpentry and mill building.[7] But George had additional talents. According to LeRoy, Isaac "*took George up to West Point and told Parrott*[8] *he had brought him a boy to learn to be a machinist and that he had a wonderful head for machinery, but he was only 14 years old."* George eventually finished his apprenticeship and began working at the West Point Foundry. He became expert at working on steamboats as well as building mills.[9]

Then in the winter of 1838 Samuel's brother Mephibosheth and his wife joined the Mormon Church.

In July 1837 Parley P. Pratt had arrived in New York City with his new bride[10] Mary Ann Frost and their two young children and hooked up with Elder Elijah Fordham as a missionary companion. According to Pratt, Fordham was the only Latter-day Saint living in the city at the time. After a miraculous healing by the missionaries several members of a Methodist study group were baptized about December in the East River, but by midwinter Pratt was discouraged and planned to try his luck in New Orleans. But during his farewell meeting he and his tiny branch experienced a remarkable outpouring of the spirit, which promised him immediate success in New York City, so he changed plans and stayed. In the next few months about a hundred new members were baptized including Mephibosheth Sirrine and his wife Mariah Wheeler.

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[7] George Warren Sirrine, *A Little Sketch of the Life of George Warren Sirrine,* unpublished, p. 3. See Memories for George Warren Sirrine KWJZ-XX6 at www.FamilySearch.org.

[8] Robert Parker Parrott, a West Point graduate became superintendent of the West Point Foundry in Cold Spring in 1836. He later became Chief of Ordnance for the U.S. Army in Washington, D. C. He was the inventor of the Parrott rifle (and projectile) used in the Civil War.

[9] George Sirrine built the first grist mill in San Bernardino in partnership with the apostles Charles C. Rich and Amasa Lyman.

[10] Pratt's first wife, Thankful Halsey, had died just four months earlier at the birth of their only child together. For a child's view of that year in New York City I recommend reading Mary Ann Stearns' autobiography posted on FamilySearch.

Satisfied, Parley P. Pratt left New York in April, 1838 with a small colony of his newly-baptized saints, headed to Missouri where the Kirtland saints were gathering at Far West. Persecution of the Mormons was heating up there. The next month a group of Mormons including Sampson Avard, Jared Carter, and George W. Robinson organized a secret military society in Far West called the "Daughters of Zion." Orrin Porter Rockwell also joined the order, later known as the Danites.

Parley was replaced in New York City by his brother Orson Pratt, who appointed Wandle Mace, one of the first to have been baptized the previous fall, to be the city's first branch president. Around June, President Mace and Mephibosheth Sirrine went up the Hudson River on a short mission, the highlight of which was to visit the Sirrine family. In his remarkable autobiography[11] Mace wrote:

> We took passage on a steamer as far as Mattawan, a small town opposite the town of Fishkill....We proceeded at once to the house of Mr. Sirrine, a short distance from Mattawan, up in the mountains. Arriving there in the middle of the afternoon, Brother M. Sirrine introduced me to his parents who received me very cordially. His mother, Mrs. Sirrine, was a very peculiar woman. When any of her family were absent, and without any communication from them, she was always apprised of their return by some means unknown to them. She would make preparations to receive them just as any mother would do when hearing directly from them. So she had prepared for our coming....We stayed with them that night and preached to them the gospel. They accepted the principles we taught as the truth of the Bible.

Samuel Sirrine was 13 years old at the time, and may have attended the meeting along with his sister Hannah Frances, who was 17. His brother George was 19, and probably lived nearby in Cold Spring, working at the West Point foundry. Seth may also have been living in Cold Spring at that time. Another brother, John, was definitely living in Cold Spring with his wife and infant daughter, and any of the three brothers may also have attended the meeting. If not, the two elders may have visited them in town, for the missionaries held several meetings throughout the area that week. Although Mace reported that the Sirrines accepted the principles that he taught them, neither of Mephibosheth's parents ever became Mormons. Both George and Samuel eventually joined the Mormon Church, but probably not at that time. According to LeRoy Sirrine's account, their only daughter, Hannah Frances, was antagonistic toward the Church, and opposed George when he later announced that he was joining. Abraham, the oldest Sirrine son, was living in Hector.

A short time later on August 5, 1838 Mephibosheth Sirrine took his wife Mariah, their three year old daughter Helen, and a one year old son to Mariah's home in Michigan on a mission

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[11] http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/WMace.html.

which would last about six years. Around that time, John Sirrine and his wife Nancy also moved back to their property in Michigan for two years.

The United States Census was conducted in Philipstown Township including Cold Spring as of June 1, 1840. I could not find Isaac's household in the census. I suspect they were missed because they were away from home somewhere on a mill building job with Hannah Frances, then 21, and Samuel, age 15. The census did show George Sirrine living there as the head of a household of four males and two females, all born between 1811 and 1820. George was the very last of 660 households listed in the census, which suggests he was living on the edge of town. He was probably running a boarding house.

If Samuel entered an apprenticeship as George had, it would have been around this time. Possibly he too worked for Robert Parrott at the West Point Foundry. But at that time many other work opportunities were opening up. The Hudson River made Putnam County an important steamboat stop, which would have provided good jobs. Later in life, Samuel identified himself as a mechanical engineer. It seems likely that his early training may have been in that field. The Philipstown Turnpike, a toll road to Connecticut, connected the town to the Atlantic Coast, transporting iron ore and grain to the east. And in the 1840s the Harlem Railroad Line connected Putnam County to New York City and to Albany, running right through Cold Spring and providing four county stops.

Nineteen year old Samuel Sirrine was probably still living with his parents in their mountain cabin on June 27, 1844 when Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered in the jail at Carthage, Illinois. He could have had no way of knowing how profoundly that event would someday change his life, but it soon affected three of his brothers.

During the following year his missionary brother Mephibosheth, who by then presided over all the Mormon branches in eastern Michigan, moved many of his converts and his own growing family to Hancock County, Illinois. In Nauvoo on October, 1845 he was appointed captain of the 24th Company of Hundreds and assigned to recruit a wagon train of Michigan saints to travel west.

On November 8th, Orson Pratt gave an oration to a large gathering in New York City at American Hall exhorting the eastern Latter-day Saints to "flee Babylon, by land or sea." In an extra edition of the *New York Messenger* on December 13, 1845, George Warren Sirrine's name was on the list of people who had been "...selected, who have means to pay their expenses by water" to sail to San Francisco. Shortly afterward, newspaperman Samuel Brannan, under the orders of Brigham Young, chartered for $1,200 dollars a month a weather-worn merchantman freighter named the *Brooklyn*, which had been re-fitted with staterooms, meeting rooms and inner decks so low that taller passengers had to duck their heads to walk, to carry 238 passengers, their belongings and the supplies required to begin a new life, along with a printing press owned by Brannan plus 800 lbs. of paying freight

ordered for the Sandwich Islands around the horn of South America to Northern California. Never mind that the "modest sized" 125 foot long ship was only legally allowed to take on 175 people (two passengers per five tons of ship weight was the rule)--100 of them were children. The fare was $50 per adult, half for children ages 5-14. The babies went free. $25 more was charged for provisions, which seems like a good deal considering that the voyage lasted four days short of six months. Six months, with only two land breaks—five days on Robinson Crusoe's island Juan Fernandez, occupied by eight lonely Chileans, and ten days in the Sandwich Islands (Oahu.)

Samuel's brother, John Sirrine, although not a Mormon, signed up with the *Brooklyn* as well. His health had failed him, and his doctor had ordered a sea voyage as the only possible means of prolonging his life. At the time this was standard treatment for tuberculosis, which he probably had. Being personally acquainted with the sea captain, who was master of one of only a few vessels trading on the Pacific Coast, John Sirrine sold his property and arranged passage for his wife and child to San Francisco, where he intended to remain until he fully recovered. There is no doubt that he also considered the trip a great business opportunity. Hostilities between Mexico and the United States had begun. John C. Fremont had come into conflict with the California Mexicans and driven them south, and the prospect of westward expansion of the United States made San Francisco seem a potentially important hub.

There was much excitement to begin the voyage. Saints began gathering in mid-January 1846, lodging in New York City boardinghouses. They came from all the surrounding states. Concerned about possible opposition, Brannan cautioned the Saints to address each other when in the city as "Mr. and Mrs." rather than "Brother and Sister" to reduce suspicion. Captain Abel W. Richardson was a staunch Baptist, who daily read the Bible and his 18 crewmen were said to have "above average morals." Preparing for a possibly hostile reception from the foreign country of Mexico, the men were armed with muskets and with 50 Allen revolvers, the newest thing. George Sirrine took his machinist tools in a large toolbox. The ship was docked on the East River.

In February, 1846 Mephibosheth might have read an article by Sam Brannan which appeared in the Nauvoo newspaper, the *Millennial Star,* advertising the departure of 238 Mormons on the *Brooklyn*, to sail January 24th. (The notice had arrived a little too late for Nauvoo people to sign up). John J. Sirrine and family, George W. Sirrine, and the S. Brannan family were among those listed as registrants.

Waiting for optimal winds, the *Brooklyn* did not actually depart until February 4, 1846, the very day that the first party of Mormons departed Nauvoo across the frozen Mississippi by wagon train bound for the Winter Quarters in Nebraska. Mephibosheth Sirrine's wagon company departed Nauvoo two months later without him, for he had been called on a mission to England.

George and John Sirrine arrived on the *Brooklyn* in San Francisco on July 31, 1846, nearly a year before Brigham Young's first wagon company reached the Salt Lake Valley.

That summer young men in New York were eagerly enlisting in the war against Mexico, and Samuel Sirrine would soon be one of them. Newly elected President James K. Polk, who had run on the expansionist platform of Manifest Destiny, tried to provoke Mexico to attack the United States by sending General Zachary Taylor and his troops to occupy disputed territory along the Rio Grande. A 2,000 man cavalry detachment of the Mexican army attacked 70 Americans on patrol in the disputed zone on April 25, 1846, killing 11 of them and capturing 52. The Mexican army then commenced the Siege of Fort Texas on May third.

Off to serve in Mexican War

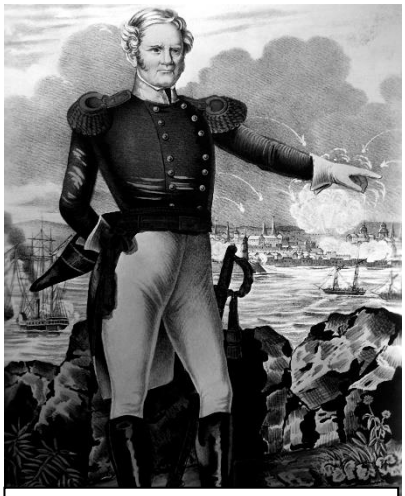
The people of the United States had been divided on the issue of war with Mexico, which was a political issue opposed by many of the northern Whigs, who felt it was an immoral grab for power by the slave states. It was favored by the poet Walt Whitman and three of the four New York newspapers, although Horace Greeley's New York Tribune opposed it. So did the author Henry David Thoreau, who famously went to jail in Massachusetts for refusing to pay poll tax and wrote the essay *Civil Disobedience* in opposition to the war. And so did the freshman congressman Abraham Lincoln, who unsuccessfully challenged the president's actions with his famous "Spot Resolutions" challenging the president to show the spot where American blood was spilt in American territory. But the Mexican attack prodded Congress to declare war on May 13, 1846.

Only eight days later, Jesse C. Little, who had been sent by Brigham Young to seek assistance for the Mormon Pioneers emigrating from Illinois, arrived in Washington, D. C. There he received advice and assistance from the attorney and Pennsylvania army officer Thomas L. Kane, who had accompanied Little on his last leg to Washington. There they met with President Polk, who agreed to receive into service "a few hundred" men from the Mormons on their way to California, later known as the Mormon Battalion. By July 1, 1846, Polk's emissary Captain James Allen had arrived at Mosquito Creek near Council Bluffs, Iowa to conscript 500 Mormon men to help secure the southwest and to finance the Mormon trek.

At the beginning of the war the U.S. Army had only eight regiments of infantry, four of artillery, and three of cavalry. To supplant the regulars, Polk began to request additional volunteers from across the nation. One group to sign up was the 7th Regiment of New York

Volunteers,[12] raised by the New York State legislator, Jonathan D. Stevenson at the request of President Polk. The Secretary of War had directed that the regiment "should be composed of unmarried men, of good habits and varied pursuits, and such as would be likely to remain in California or adjoining territory at the close of the war." The 7th Regiment departed from New York Harbor on five ships on September 27, 1846 for San Francisco and were sent from there on March 19, 1847 to the California capital of Monterrey, where they participated in the battles of La Paz and Todos Santos before they were disbanded in 1848.

The New York Volunteers were not gone long before another regiment of New York volunteers was recruited—this one included 21 year old Samuel Duncan Sirrine.



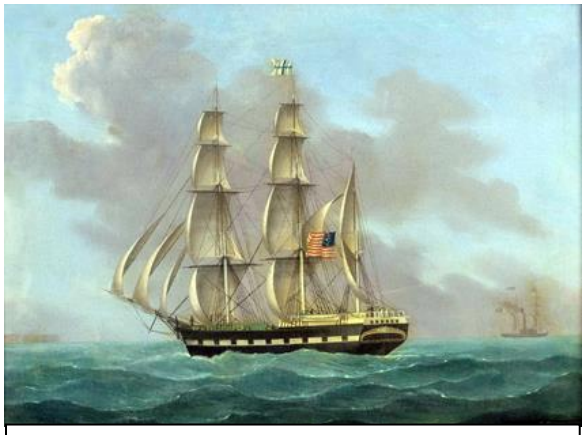
General Winfield Scott at Vera Cruz

To supplement the army of Zachary Taylor heading south into Mexico from Texas, President Polk had decided to put together another army under General Winfield Scott to make an amphibious attack at Vera Cruz on the eastern coast of Mexico and to fight its way directly to Mexico City. Among his 12,000 men were officers who later became household names during the Civil War: Robert E. Lee, George Meade, Ulysses S. Grant, Thomas Stonewall Jackson and others. Among them was Colonel Ward B. Burnett, who commissioned the second New York Regiment of ten companies. Samuel Sirrine enrolled the day after Christmas 1846 and mustered into Company K under Captain Garrett Dykerkman on December 30th at the U.S. Army Garrison at Fort Hamilton, N.Y., located on the southern tip of Brooklyn at the mouth of the East River. Samuel was described as 5' 10½" tall with blue eyes and a light complexion. Each enlistee picked out an old flint musket imprinted with "Harpers Ferry, USA." They were mustered in with an oath, elected their non-commissioned officers (Samuel was an orderly sergeant, one of 40 sergeants among 805 soldiers), and received payment of $21 with a deduction of $5.50 for expenses along the way,

Colonel Ward B. Burnett

[12] The 7th Regiment was later re-designated in early 1848 by the War Department as the 1st Regiment New York Volunteers, for service in California and during the war with Mexico, now also called the 1st New York Legion. However, this fact was not well known outside of California and thus another regiment formed in New York by Colonel Ward B. Burnett served in Mexico as the 1st Regiment New York Volunteers during the war but was re-designated by the War Department as the 2nd Regiment of New York Volunteers. (link)

although one of his fellow volunteers noted that 10 cents would have covered them. They had time to drill, to attend church together, to eye the ladies, and then four sailing ships loaded with cheering volunteers began a long trip around the tip of Florida to anchor off Brazos at the southern tip of Texas, where General Scott was assembling his troops. Samuel and his company were aboard the barque *Jubilee*. With the sailing ships anchored offshore, the battalion doctor and commissary rowed to Brazos for mail and medicine. Around January 30th the volunteers mustered on deck to hear orders read from General Scott to immediately proceed to the Isle of Lobos, some 60 miles south of Tampico and await further orders. Lobos is a tiny speck of land no more than a mile long and a half-mile wide a few miles off the eastern coast of Mexico located about halfway between Brazos and Vera Cruz. The winds were poor and sometimes the ships made only five or six miles a day. High ranking officers were cruising back and forth on steamships. The sailing ships were caught up in a hurricane on the way and overshot the island, actually coming within spyglass range of Vera Cruz itself before making their way back to the tiny island on February 16th. They anchored there and sent a few men from each company to go ashore and clear away bushes to pitch tents before landing and meeting with the rest of the regiments, who had arrived a few days earlier. Some of the New York Volunteers had not yet received their uniforms. Twenty vessels from various states were anchored there, all full of soldiers, wagons, mules, and ordnance. On February 18th they all mustered and marched with their muskets on parade. Three members of the Louisiana Volunteers died there and were buried with honors of war.[13]



A New York barque, 1848

On February 21, General Winfield Scott arrived by steamship, the flagship *Massachusetts*. Two days later, the man-of-war brig *Perry* arrived from the blockade of Vera Cruz. On Feb 27 all the troops on Lobos Island were ordered to be ready to sail. There were now about a hundred vessels around the island, looking like a wilderness of spars and rigging. Three companies of Second Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers were ordered back to land due to an outbreak of small pox.

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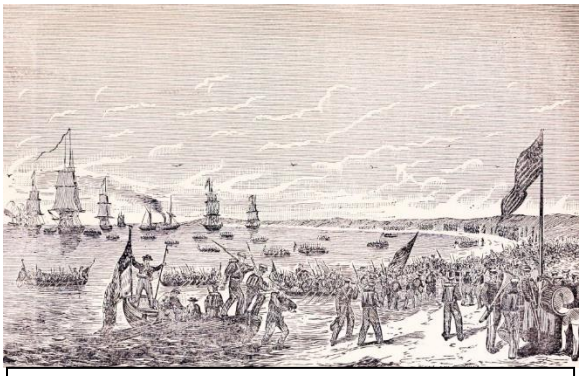
[13] I am indebted to Oswandel, J. Jacob, *Notes of the Mexican War 1846-47-48: Comprising Incidents, Adventures And Everyday Proceedings And Letters While With the United States Army In the Mexican War; Also Extracts From Ancient Histories of Mexico, Giving an Accurate Account of the First And Original Settlers of Mexico, Etc.; Also the Names And Numbers of the Different Rulers of Mexico; Also Influence of the Church.* Philadelphia, 1885, for much of the detail of this section.



Landing at Vera Cruz 1847

Expecting strong opposition at Vera Cruz, which held 7,000 men,[14] the armada of 200 sails weighed anchor and headed south to meet the regular navy fleet, which had surrounded Vera Cruz to protect the unarmed troop transports. Samuel and his New York Volunteers anchored off-shore to observe about 6,000 regular army troops make the first landing on March 9th in specially built "surf boats" containing 70 to 100 men each under the accompaniment of bands playing Yankee Doodle, the Star Spangled Banner, and Hail Columbia from their ships. Then the 6,000 volunteers followed, achieving their landing before 9 pm without losing a single man or experiencing any opposition. That night several cannon shots were heard from the castle at Vera Cruz, but none reached the encampment. During the next three days, the force fanned out to surround and besiege the city and to guard the train tracks. They received periodic fire from the city, which they were unable to answer because they had not been able to land any heavy ordnance, but the American ships began bombarding Vera Cruz from the bay. On March 18th a Mexican courier was intercepted. He was carrying news that General Zachary Taylor had defeated Santa Anna at Buena Vista. On March 18th, the New York Volunteers joined with the Pennsylvanians to rescue some penned-in men. Heavy cannons were landed for the infantry's use to complement the bombardment of Vera Cruz from the sea, and on March 27th, the Mexican soldiers at Vera Cruz surrendered, having lost 1,100 casualties compared to only 45 Americans. Two men from the New York Regiment were killed including one in Samuel's company. Four were wounded, and two were taken prisoner by the enemy. The American soldiers still on the beach were permitted to pitch their tents for the first time since the Isle of Lobos.

On April 9, 1847 the troops left Vera Cruz, marching toward Mexico City on the sandy National Road. The ranches and huts were all deserted and not a Mexican could be seen all the first day. The men were fatigued and exhausted, throwing aside unnecessary articles. Stragglers were attacked by guerillas. Many soldiers had diarrhea. On April 13, some of the cavalry came into camp, who reported finding three American soldiers dead on the road. Two of them were from Samuel's regiment. Scouts reported that General Santa Anna was waiting for them at Cerro Gordo Pass with 14,000 soldiers,[15] strongly entrenched. General Scott joined the troops on April 14th and led them to a complete victory, capturing 3,000 Mexican troops, 43 artillery pieces, 5,000 rifles, and much ammunition and

[14] That was the army's estimate, but historians estimate that the Mexican forces in Vera Cruz numbered 3,400.

[15] Historians number this force at 9,000 men.

provisions. They also captured Santa Anna's private carriage, $60,000 in specie, and the Mexican general's prosthetic leg. However, Santa Anna and two other generals escaped with the rest of the troops. The Americans suffered 434 casualties; the Mexicans lost about 1,000. Four more New York Volunteers were among the dead including one from Samuel's company. Four were wounded.[16]

The troops began marching in chase of Santa Anna's army on April 21st over the 40 miles to Jalapa, which is near the 17,907 foot mountain Citlaltepetl. On May 1, several of the New York Volunteers, who had been foraging for beef cattle were killed in an ambush by guerillas. They called Jalapa "Camp Misery" due to the procrastination of reinforcements, supplies, the amount of disease, and continuing guerilla attacks. Volunteers from Tennessee, Illinois, Alabama, and Kentucky were discharged, having signed up for just one year of service, but no New Yorkers. The next day the remaining army set out uphill for Puebla City. Along the way, most were garrisoned in the castle at Perote, but the New Yorkers and South Carolinians marched beyond the town to camp despite fears of an encounter with Santa Anna and his 5,000, which fortunately did not occur. Samuel and the New York Regiment arrived in Puebla, the second largest city in Mexico, which surrendered without a fight, on June 30th, but it was at least a week before the whole army arrived. They garrisoned there until August 6th. Although there were no battles fought during that time, it was not easy. On July 14th an officer of the New York Regiment got "wild and crazy drunk" and with a drawn sword ran Mexican civilians off in every direction. He was captured and reprimanded. The troops murmured that an enlisted man would have been dealt with more severely. Two days later another member of the New York Regiment had his throat cut from ear to ear. The rest were swearing vengeance.

But by August 6th, they were assigned to General David Emanuel Twiggs' division, which was composed of South Carolina, New York and Second Pennsylvania Volunteers and a detachment of 400 US Marines. They went ahead to Mexico City, leaving the Pennsylvania Volunteers behind to garrison the town of Puebla, take care of over 2,000 sick and wounded soldiers, and guard the city. General Twiggs' division was about 10,000 men, but they expected to meet an army of over 30,000 in Mexico City, a well-fortified city of 200,000 people.

General David E. Twiggs

On August 10, 1847 Samuel Sirrine participated in the Battle of Contreras, a great victory for the U.S., just outside

[16] State of New York No. 88 in Assembly, Feb 6, 1849, Report of Colonel Ward B. Burnett to General Samuel Stevens, New York City, December 2, 1848 for this and subsequent estimates of casualties among New York Volunteers.

of Mexico City. General Gabriel Valencia was defeated when he disobeyed Santa Anna and met the Americans on the south of the city, causing Santa Anna to fall to his second line of defense at the Churubusco River.

At Contreras the U.S. Army outnumbered the defending Mexican troops two to one. Scott sent Generals Twiggs and Pillow with their regiments. Twiggs led the New Yorkers to victory at Churubusco despite the necessity of wading several deep ditches exposed to a severe and galling fire from the enemy. They defeated a fortified convent, experiencing a bayonet charge and intense hand to hand combat. The New York Regiment's three highest ranking officers were severely wounded--Samuel's Captain Garrett Dyckeman, Captain Charles Innes, and Colonel Burnett himself--but the now seasoned New York Regiment promptly executed the movement. Captain Van O'Linden of the New York Regiment was killed at the head of his company. Lieutenant Colonel Baxter of the same regiment fell mortally wounded near the wall. The Americans entered the convent over an abandoned battery. For a short time the contest was hand to hand. Swords and bayonets were crossed and rifles clubbed. Seven pieces of artillery, one thousand muskets, and 550 prisoners were taken, of whom one hundred were Mexican officers including a general and two colonels. There were 133 Mexicans killed and 865 wounded. This battle involved the capture of the so-called Patricio Battalion, made up largely of American deserters, who were making a desperate last stand. Many of them were executed as traitors. Sixteen of the New Yorkers were killed, including three in Samuel's company, and 88 were wounded. Samuel was one of 20 soldiers to be advanced in rank for their performance during that battle. He was promoted to 1st Sergeant.

At this point General Scott held back, hoping to spare Mexico City. There was a truce, but negotiations failed and Scott launched an attack on the city. August 19th and 20th the New York Volunteers were part of the Battle of Chapultepec, a castle on a 200 foot hill. That day, General Twiggs fell wounded at the head of his command, leading the assault. The key fortress was captured on September 13th. General Bravo surrendered to the New York Regiment, who raised the American flag over the castle. Eight more men of the regiment were killed in this battle and 67 were wounded.

Santa Anna retreated and Scott accepted the surrender of the remaining Mexican forces on September 14th. The New York Volunteers were said to have had elegant quarters fronting on the plaza of San Angel, having been assigned to occupy and control the city during the truce negotiations and afterwards. They received reinforcements from New York on January 25, 1848 on a train from Vera Cruz, who were said to be "fine looking young men." The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to end the war was not reached until February 2, 1848 and ratified by the U.S. Senate the following month.

The Mexican War was the deadliest American War in history excepting the Civil War. Of 78,718 who served, 16.9% died. Total combat casualties for the war for Americans were

1,721, but an additional 11,562 American soldiers died of illness.[17] On February 11, 1848 a court martial was held in the Mexico City garrison to try several members of the New York and South Carolina Regiments for stealing General Cushing's horse two weeks earlier. They didn't exactly steal it, but were on guard and were accused of aiding. On the evening of April 13 as Colonel Ward Burnett[18] of the New York Regiment, and Major Bowman of the First Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers were returning from the city of Mexico to San Angel, they were fired upon by a party of guerillas, and succeeded in capturing several of them. Rolls for April 30, 1848 show that Samuel was sick that day—presence or absence not stated. No medical record was attached.

By the end of May, the Volunteers were on their way to Vera Cruz and then home. With the fighting over, the men turned to lighter pursuits. On the evening of June 14th some of the New York officers held a horse race. One horse was blind and the other was lame, yet the lame one won the wager of one dollar a side. They had a large tent encampment at El Encero, the former residence of Santa Anna. A member of the New York Regiment sketched the camp and General Patterson intended to have it lithographed. Ships were awaiting troops at Vera Cruz. The New York Regiment left Vera Cruz around June 18, 1848 on the schooner *Creole,* bound for New Orleans.

Samuel was honorably discharged from a military hospital in New Orleans on June 30th in time to return with his company to New York City on the ship *Fanny Forster*, where they were greeted on July 22, 1848, at Battery Park in a city-wide celebration. Of the 676 men in the 10 companies of New York Volunteers, 24% had been killed, 25% were discharged sick or wounded, leaving half in neither category. No mention of any injury was mentioned in Samuel Sirrine's military pension application in 1888.

Samuel, now 23 years old, came home to a 65 year old father and 59 year old mother living in Cold Springs. His only sister Hannah was also living there with her husband and a three year old girl. His oldest brother Abraham was still living in Hector. Samuel had probably not heard of two deaths among his siblings during his service. Abraham's wife Salina had died in April while Samuel was garrisoned in Mexico City, awaiting his orders to return

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[17] Casualty rates for other wars were: Civil War 21%, WWI and WWII 2.5%, Korea and Viet Nam 0.1% White, Ronald Cedric, *American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant,* N.Y. Random House, (2017) p. 96.

[18] Ward Benjamin Burnett, a Pennsylvania native, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1832. He resigned from the army in 1836 and became a civil engineer. When the U.S. war with Mexico began, Burnett enlisted as Colonel of the First New York Volunteers, and was engaged with his regiment in the siege at Vera Cruz, the Battle of Cerro Gordo, the Battle of Contreras, and the Battle of Churubusco, where he was severely wounded. For gallant and distinguished service, he was brevetted Brigadier General, U.S. Volunteers in August, 1848. He was awarded a Gold Medal by the City of New York for his valorous service in the Mexican War. Burnett died in Washington, D.C., on June 24, 1884, and was buried at West Point.

home. Mephibosheth had died of consumption[19] on April 29, 1848, three weeks after Salina, in the arms of his wife on a riverboat on the Ohio River. He was on his way to Council Bluffs, Iowa from his last mission in Manchester, England. "Bosha" left a widow named Rachel Gillette and three children behind: Helen, Theodore, and Parley Pratt Sirrine, ages 13, 11, and five, who were living with other Mormons near Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Samuel's other living brothers were in San Francisco. George Warren Sirrine, who had joined the Mormon Church sometime before embarking on the *Brooklyn*, married fellow passenger Emeline Lane on August 30, 1846 about a month after arriving in California. According his biographer, LeRoy Sirrine, George built a saw mill north of the bay shortly after arriving, which was washed out by a flood. John Sirrine may have been the first American to discover California gold on September 16, 1846 as a part of the *Brooklyn* Mormons' brief settlement on the San Joaquin River shortly after arrival.[20] The California gold rush officially began May 10, when Sam Brannon made his famous hat-waving announcement "Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River" on the San Francisco dock after quietly securing all available merchandise for his stores.[21] Former members of the Mormon Battalion had found gold at Sutter's Mill on January 24, 1848.

That spring John Sirrine worked a mining claim successfully until he ran out of supplies, and then returned to San Francisco to invest his gold. Never joining the Mormon Church, he made a fortune in real estate in San Francisco. There he built the first frame house on the Pacific coast, which became a rallying place for New Yorkers. He served as school board trustee and superintendent of San Francisco's first hotel, the Parker House.[22] He bought lots, built on them, and sold, making a handsome profit. He logged redwoods, built the city's first warehouse, served as president of the San Francisco city council in 1849,[23] and finally returned to live near Hector in Trumansburg, New York in 1850, where he bought a house, eight acres and a warehouse for $8,000 in gold. The travel cure for John's tuberculosis must have worked incredibly well, for he lived there to the age of 91.

According to LeRoy, George only spent a single day in California panning for gold, finding just enough to make a gold ring for himself. Like John, George invested in real estate, but with less success. He was best known in San Francisco as a leader in Sam Brannon's volunteer police force known as the Vigilance Committee. George was not tall, but very well built and athletic, good at boxing and wrestling. Brannon was aware that George had

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[19] Tuberculosis

[20] By one account, John Sirrine and George M. Evans discovered gold on September 16, 1846 about eight or ten miles from Lindsay's Lake near Stockton. *San Francisco Examiner*, Thursday, January 25, 1872, page 1.

[21] Bancroft, Hubert Howe, *History of California*, 6:56.

[22] Laura Rudy, *The Trumansburg Free Press and Sentinel*, January 15, 1936.

[23] Annals of San Francisco, Part 2, Chapter VII 1849, p. 218.

experience in police work in New York and relied on him to play the role of enforcer. This reputation is probably the reason why the Mormon Apostles Amasa Lyman and Charles C. Rich asked George to carry the $7,000 in gold from San Francisco to San Bernardino in September, 1851 as a down payment on the Lugo Ranch, where the Mormon Colony was to settle that fall.[24] George built the first grist mill in San Bernardino, California in partnership with Rich and Lyman, who later bought him out. He used the proceeds in a venture to develop a coal mine at Point Loma in San Diego, in which Samuel may have later had a role.

I assume that Samuel returned to his parents' home after his military service. It is possible that he came home to a girlfriend. In Fishkill, which was 10 miles north of Cold Spring just over the Dutchess County line, lived the family of John and Sarah Titus, who had been living in Hector at the time of the Sirrines' tragic house fire. The Titus family, who had a daughter named Catherine ("Cate") about Samuel's age, moved back to Dutchess County a few years after the Sirrines left, to be near Cate's mother. It is possible that Samuel and Cate were acquainted since birth.

By August 31, 1850, the reference date of the 1850 U.S. Census, Samuel had moved to Covert, Seneca County, New York, just two miles north of Trumansburg, where he lived with John[25] and his family. Three doors down the road lived their oldest brother Abraham and his second wife Sophie. Abraham was listed as a hotel keeper. He probably owned the building, since he claimed real estate worth $8,000. Samuel was listed as a laborer. If he didn't work on John's farm, perhaps he worked in Abraham's hotel. He would later work in a hotel in Salt Lake City.

Twenty-one year old Cate Titus was living just three miles south of Trumansburg in the village of Ulysses with Sally Titus, age 40, probably her father's younger sister. Cate's father had died just a month before Samuel had returned from the war and her widowed mother was still living in Fishkill with Cate's four younger siblings. I think there is a good chance that Cate followed Samuel to Trumansburg or vice versa, for they were married there by 1852. They had their first child, Charles M. Sirrine on December 6th.

I am not aware of any religious affiliation for Samuel during that period, but his older brother John, who had been interested in Methodism as a young boy during the religious excitement of the 1820s, joined the Baptist Church in Trumansburg in 1852. John was said to be an avid Christian, having memorized most of the Bible and freely quoted it by the hour. He was known as an excellent speaker and a frequent participator in church prayer

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[24] This story comes from LeRoy's biography.

[25] On July 31, 1863 George J. Sirrine, John's oldest child, was killed at Gettysburg by a ball through the head. He was the only Trumansburg recruit to die there. Four thousand showed up for his funeral and the Ithaca brass band played there. John made a second trip to California in August of 1870. He spent six months there and then on February 2, 1871 his ship, the steamer *Golden City* wrecked at Point Lazro on the Baja Peninsula. John was returned to San Francisco by ship and took the train back home to New York.

meetings. A few years later, he joined the Presbyterians. Samuel, Abraham, and John Sirrine were all enrolled among 30 members of the Trumansburg Chapter of Masons in 1854 and 1855. John was one of 15 officers, a Master of the 3rd Vail.

Sometime in 1855 Samuel left Cate permanently and moved back to Philipstown.

On March 12, 1855 Cate delivered another child in Trumansburg, whom she named Mary Sirrine. Little Mary died there at the age of five. Samuel may have been gone by then. Cate filed for a divorce from Samuel on the grounds of abandonment on December 23, 1861, but it was not granted until May 3, 1870 by the Tompkins County Supreme Court. She would remain single for 24 years. Her widowed mother Sarah Titus moved in with Cate before 1860 to help raise Charles M. and lived with her until Cate married 66 year old George N. Wilson in 1879 when she was 49.

By the age of 19, Samuel's son Charles M. was living on his own in a boarding house in Ithaca, working as a store clerk. He never married, working for years as a traveling liquor salesman and finally as the proprietor of a cigar store for Lafayette Cigar Company in Meadville, Pennsylvania. Charles died of cirrhosis at the age of 68 in 1921.

Little is known with certainty about Samuel's life or location for the four years after he left Cate. A document found in the records of Putnam County, New York shows that on September 27, 1855 he was paid $56.45 for services as sheriff. His obituary written decades later in the Philipstown newspaper offered a clue, noting that *"In 1856 he went west, settling first in Salt Lake City and finally in California."* The year was probably accurate, but not the location, for the first solid evidence of Samuel in Salt Lake City was in July, 1859, when he was mentioned as a witness in a court case. Of course, he could have gone there earlier, but he went to California first. The one piece of evidence comes from the documentation of his Latter-day Saint baptism. In the same index[26] that told of his mission it was noted that Samuel D. Sirrine had been baptized by William Cox, 3rd Quorum of Seventy, on September 1, 1857. The location was not given, but it can be deduced.

A prominent Mormon named William J. Cox, born in 1815 in Tennessee, was ordained a Seventy in Salt Lake City on January 18, 1851, by A. P. Rockwell and Elder Bird and subsequently appointed to the position of Stake President over the Mormon settlement in San Bernardino.[27] Cox lived in San Bernardino continuously from the arrival of settlers in the fall of 1851 until Brigham Young re-called them in the fall of 1857 because of the threat of Johnston's Army.

Samuel must have been baptized in San Bernardino.

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[26] https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/chd/individual/samuel-duncan-sirrine-1830?lang=eng.

[27] William J. Cox Tells his Own Story

Actually, that makes sense. At the time of his baptism, Samuel had no family members in Utah. In 1851 his brother George left San Francisco for San Bernardino when the apostles Charles C. Rich and Amasa Lyman moved the California Mormon headquarters there from the Bay area. By 1856 George had sold his mill in San Bernardino and put his money into a coal mine in San Diego.[28] With the encouragement of Charles C. Rich, George had gone into partnership with Ephraim Green, a former member of the Mormon Battalion who had spotted a potentially rich coal vein near the ocean shore in 1847, and two other Mormons, Harvey Chester Ladd and Seth Benjamin Tanner, to develop the site. In November of 1855 they petitioned the City of San Diego for a fifteen-year lease of 40 acres on a western slope approximately a mile and a half north of the Point Loma lighthouse. By March 1, 1856, the drillers had found a coal vein about 4.5 feet thick at 82 feet of depth, and they dug to160 feet by August. By June 23rd seepage from the nearby ocean began to be a problem, which continued off and on until February of 1857, when George was made chief engineer of the project and seemed to find a solution. A large group of San Bernardino Mormons joined the effort in August of 1857. Within 28 feet of the main coal deposit, the project was abandoned in November, largely because of Brigham Young's call for the San Bernardino saints to return to Utah.

Samuel probably went to San Bernardino to work with his brother George in the new coal enterprise, which may explain his interest in mining and prospecting when he later lived in Utah. Samuel may have joined George in California in 1856 at the beginning of the project, but his name does not appear in accounts of this endeavor, and I think that he probably was one of the large group of San Bernardino Mormons who joined the project in the summer of 1857.

Many important events in Mormon history which affected his later life in Utah happened in 1856 and 1857, some of which involved the Latter-day Saints in the San Bernardino colony.

It was in August of 1856, that Almon W. Babbitt was killed 120 miles west of Fort Kearney, Wyoming while carrying a large amount of money from the federal government allocated for the Utah Territorial Government. The official account reported that he was killed by Indians, but suspicion fell upon Porter Rockwell. News of this reached the press from coast to coast, generating anti-Mormon sentiment.

The so-called Mormon Reformation began around September, 1856. This was a time of retrenchment and division among Latter-day Saints, consolidating and re-baptizing the orthodox members, rejecting dissenters, and increasing hostility toward gentile outsiders.

On October 4, 1856, Brigham Young was made aware of the plight of the Martin and Willie handcart companies, who were stopped by winter weather and stranded without adequate

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[28] Bradley Hill, *The San Diego Coal Company: An Early Mormon Enterprise on Point Loma,* The Journal of San Diego History. Jun 2010 p.67-82.

food or clothing. A large rescue effort was generated in Utah Territory to assist them. The first relief party met the handcart company on October 19. When the Willie Company arrived in Salt Lake City on November 9th, 68 members had died.

On February 18, 1857 four men were attacked in the Santa Clara River area as they were leaving Utah including a military surveyor and John Tobin, son-in-law to Charles C. Rich. Tobin was suspected of being an apostate. Three escaped and Tobin was left for dead but survived. They (at least Tobin) fled all the way to San Bernardino to the sanctuary of the Rakabites, a dissenting group of local Mormons, significantly not first seeking out the help of Charles C. Rich, who was living there with three of his wives. The Mormons in the Washington area of southern Utah were blamed for the attack. Reports that Porter Rockwell had been sighted to presumably finish the job on the travelers were circulated, arousing both sides, although he was on his way to exercise the U.S. mail contract out of Independence, Missouri by March 1. That same month other violence had arisen between the faithful and the apostate Mormons in San Bernardino. Samuel was probably there or at the nearby San Diego mine at that time. Much attention was given to this incident in San Bernardino and in the California newspapers.

In April, 1857 Charles C. Rich and Amasa Lyman left San Bernardino for good, having been called on a mission to England, although their departure from Salt Lake would be delayed until April 29, 1860. A month later, Parley P. Pratt was murdered in Arkansas by Hector McLean, the estranged husband of one of his plural wives, further stirring up animosity between Mormons and Gentile neighbors. Many Mormons viewed Pratt's death as a martyrdom, blaming it on the people of Arkansas, which may have played a role in the Mountain Meadows massacre a few months later.

Then on July 24, 1857 Porter Rockwell appeared at the Pioneer Day celebration in Big Cottonwood Canyon with the news that President Buchanan had commissioned Johnston's Army to subdue the Mormons and install a new governor to replace Brigham Young.

Col. Albert Sidney Johnston

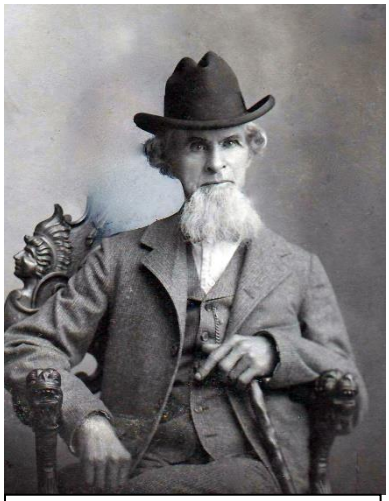
It was probably in the late summer of 1857 that George Sirrine returned from full time work at the coal mine in San Diego to San Bernardino where he worked with his father-in-law Charles Crismon, running a distillery and mill. And that was when Samuel was baptized. Ten days after Samuel's baptism, the infamous Mountain Meadows Massacre took place on September 11, 1857. At the time there was a great division between faithful and less faithful Mormons in San Bernardino over the issue. Southern Californians were threatening to attack the Mormons in San Bernardino and local apostates were stirring up trouble. This must have had an effect on newly baptized Samuel.

The day after Mountain Meadows, Brigham Young warned the Utah Mormons to prepare to evacuate the Salt Lake Valley in the anticipation of invasion by Col. Albert Sidney Johnston's army. On September 21, Colonel Robert T. Burton and 70 Nauvoo Legionnaires were at Devil's Gate caching provisions, and on October 1, Fort Bridger was burned by Porter Rockwell and members of the legion.

In November, 1857 the Aiken Party, a group of six men who had been identified as spies by the edgy Mormon leadership, was attacked and killed by Orrin Porter Rockwell, Bill Hickman, and others. In January Brigham Young ordered the Utah stakes and wards to raise an army of 1,000 men for a year.

Thomas L. Kane

That month Mormon families began departing San Bernardino for Utah, including the stake president, William J. Cox. Among one of the first parties on the trail was a mysterious botanist who had identified himself as Doctor Osborne from Philadelphia, offering money for safe passage to Utah. He turned out to be none other than Thomas L. Kane, the friend of the Mormons who had interceded with President Polk on Jesse C. Little's trip to Washington, D.C. in 1846. He was traveling incognito to Utah to act as an intermediary between Brigham Young and General Johnston and Governor Alfred Cumming.



George Warren Sirrine

The rest of the returning Mormons left San Bernardino in family groups over the next several months. George Warren Sirrine and his family traveled with his father-in-law, Charles Crismon, in a large company that departed in March. Crismon was wealthy, and this company included many wagons, 300 mules, over 2,000 head of livestock, sheep, and cattle, and he brought the first bee hives into Utah. There were many people in this group, which does not appear in the Mormon Pioneer Database, including the returning Hawaii missionary Joseph F. Smith, who was hired to drive the wagon of one of Crismon's plural wives. His brother George had adopted the orphaned children of their brother Mephibosheth. Helen, Boshe's oldest, had married and stayed in San Bernardino with Parley, her youngest brother. But Mephibosheth's oldest boy, 18 year old Theodore Sirrine, travelled with the Crismon train to Utah.

However, Samuel Sirrine remained for at least one more year in San Bernardino, for his name appears on a list of early district attorneys of the city, where he served in 1858.[29]

Most of the families returning from San Bernardino did not go directly to Salt Lake City, which was preparing for evacuation in response to the threat from Johnston's Army. A large number of them including President Cox settled in Beaver, Utah, which tripled its population that year. Many others settled in Payson and elsewhere south of the Salt Lake Valley. George's wife Esther Ann Crismon Sirrine travelled while pregnant and delivered a baby on April 1, 1858 when they reached Parowan, and their family stopped there for a time.

On April 12th Governor Cumming and Kane arrived in Salt Lake and the "amiable (new) governor met no resistance in taking over his office and establishing a comfortable relationship with his predecessor (Brigham Young.)"[30]

Brigham Young visited encampments on April 23rd of the Bountiful Ward and other wards who had settled temporarily along the lower Provo River. Centerville Ward had been sent to Spanish Fork. Big Cottonwood Ward had aimed for Beaver, but most settled west of Provo, on the north side of the Provo River. An estimated 30,000 people moved—10,000 from outside of Salt Lake City and the rest from the city. Eight hundred wagons left the valley per day. In late May, only about 2,400 people remained in Salt Lake City. Many of them were people from Northern Utah towns, who had moved in.

George Sirrine joined the White Mountain Expedition on Saturday, April 24th at Iron Springs, 30 miles west of Parowan, which Brigham Young had commissioned to find a place in the west desert where the saints from Salt Lake Valley could permanently relocate if necessary. George was appointed captain over the fifteen volunteers from the town of Washington. Most of the Cedar City men in the group of 66 had been participants in the Mountain Meadows massacre. There were 120 animals and 20 wagons in the southern expedition party led by Col. William H. Dame of the Nauvoo Legion, a local bishop and one of the principals at the massacre. The group included Lyman Curtis, James H. Martineau of Parowan (second to Dame in command), a 30 year old veteran of the Mexican War, Don C. Smith, son-in-law to John D. Lee who had done a lot of the recruiting, and Francis Hamblin, brother of the famed Jacob Hamblin. They eventually joined up with a northern group led by George W. Bean, mapped the entire west desert, found no good places for the saints to

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[29] The first DA was William Stout, who had sailed on the Brooklyn and was in office from 1853-1855 after San Bernardino County separated from Los Angeles County in 1853. Ellis Ames served from 1856-1857. Source: Ingersoll's Century Annals of San Bernardino County 1769 to 1904, p. 317.

[30] Poll, Richard, D., *The Move South,* BYU Studies. Journal 29:4, p. 70.

re-locate, settled the valley of Meadow and planted crops before returning in June after Brigham Young released the saints to return from the exodus.[31]

Esther Ann went on from Parowan with her father's family to Provo waiting for George to return. It seems likely that Samuel was with her.

Gov. Alfred Cumming

On June 13th the last of the Mormon evacuees were still moving out of the valley while Brigham Young was meeting with Cumming and the peace commissioners. On June 26, 1858 General Johnston and 2,500 men marched through the mostly vacated Salt Lake City to Camp Floyd,[32] southwest of Salt Lake City. About 1,500 Mormons had remained in the northern settlements. Some had military assignments to protect or torch property as might be ordered. But by June 30th an agreement had been reached and Brigham Young announced that he was going home and the saints were at liberty to follow.[33] The return was mostly uncoordinated, with most families returning in July and part of August. Ward meetings were resumed on an as-needed basis until late in the year. The old Salt Lake Tabernacle was not put back into use until 1859. The Relief Society did not revive until a decade later.

George's family did not go all the way to Salt Lake in the general move back. George built a mill in American Fork Canyon the summer and fall of 1858 and during the next winter. It was known as "The Sirrine Mill," but it was owned by the three Woodmansee brothers, who owned a large mercantile operation in Salt Lake City with branch stores throughout the territory. It seems logical to assume that Samuel also stopped in Utah County to help George with the mill project.

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[31] Stott, Clifford L., Search for Sanctuary: Brigham Young and the White Mountain Expedition, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake city, 1984.

[32] The camp soon grew to 7,000. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_War.

[33] Poll, Richard, D., *The Move South,* BYU Studies. Journal 29:4 p.82.

CHAPTER TWO – SALT LAKE CITY

George Sirrine moved his family to Salt Lake City in the early spring of 1859 when the mill in American Fork Canyon was finished, settling into a house in the 14th Ward where George's father-in-law Charles Crismon had settled. Crismon's house was on the west side of West Temple where the Salt Palace now stands. The Sirrines arrived there sometime before March 15th, when another daughter, Mary Isabelle Sirrine, was born.

The first documentation I can find that Samuel was in Salt Lake City is a notice in the *Deseret News* of a divorce trial in probate court held on July 13, 1859 in which S. D. Sirrine and Orrin Smith were sworn in and testified as witnesses on behalf of the plaintiff Ellen M. Brizzee vs. Henry W. Brizzee. The story behind that divorce sheds light on Samuel's activities.

Orrin Smith was the step-father of the plaintiff, Ellen M. Brizzee. Smith was an old acquaintance of Samuel's brothers, George and John, who sailed with them on the *Brooklyn* with his family of ten, the largest group on the ship. He and his wife Amy Ann Dowd were both in a second marriage, sailing with his kids, her kids, and one of theirs, and she was pregnant. While on the ship, Orrin was excommunicated[34] along with three other passengers by Sam Brannon. The Smiths prematurely left the *Brooklyn* and stayed for a time on the island of Oahu, where he and Amy lost her newborn girl and also their 18 month old boy, Orrin Jr. They later moved to Bodega, California, about 70 miles up the coast from San Francisco sometime before June 7, 1847 when their third child, Elizabeth Ann Smith was born. By 1849 the Smith family was living in Natomas in the Sacramento area.

Orrin E. Smith

Despite the excommunication, the Smiths apparently still considered themselves Mormons. They resumed church activity when they were no longer under Brannon's influence and like many other faithful saints in the gold fields, they decided to heed Brigham Young's call to join him in Utah. On April 30, 1855 the family became part of the William McBride Company of 24 people in eight wagons, which left from Santa Clara, traveling down the

[34] The cause of his excommunication was a dispute with Sam Brannon over the doctrine of plural marriage. Will Bagley, *Scoundrel's Tale, the Samuel Brannan Papers,* Utah State University Press, Logan, Utah 1999, p. 190.

west coast to Los Angeles and then to San Bernardino. They arrived May 21st. The rest of the McBride Company traveled on to Salt Lake City, but Orrin Smith stayed in San Bernardino with his wife and six children. Two of the children were teenage step-daughters from Amy Ann Dowd's first marriage, the Hopkins sisters Ellen Maria and Emily Marilla. The Smith family lived in San Bernardino for about a year before moving on to Utah in April, 1856. During that time they would certainly have associated with George Warren Sirrine and his family, but it is not clear whether Samuel Sirrine had arrived in San Bernardino before they left for the Valley.

It was after the Smith family arrived in Utah that Orrin Smith's step-daughter Ellen Maria Hopkins married Henry W. Brizzee, but it is possible that the couple had a relationship before Ellen left Sacramento with family on April 30, 1855, when Ellen was just two weeks short of her 19th birthday. Brizzee was married then, but would be divorced a year later.[35]

Henry Willard Brizzee had received his L.D.S. endowment in the Nauvoo Temple with the last minute group on February 6, 1846 just before hitting the Mormon Trail. After serving in the Mormon Battalion he drifted to the gold fields, where he married Emily Amanda Rockwell, the 18 year old daughter of the infamous Mormon enforcer Orrin Porter Rockwell, in Sacramento, California in 1851. Emily had either eloped or was abducted from Salt Lake City to the gold fields of California in 1849 at the age of 16 with Hiram Gates, a married man who was 30 years older. This may be part of the reason why Orrin Porter Rockwell was called to accompany Amasa Lyman to San Francisco on April 11, 1849, barely a month after he was elected Deputy Marshal of the State of Deseret in its first public election. Rockwell helped Lyman to collect tithing money from Sam Brannon and the Mormon gold miners, and

Henry W. Brizzee and Emily Rockwell

[35] I could find no documentation of the marriage between Brizzee and Ellen in Utah. It is possible that there never was a document, since the wedding probably happened during the chaotic time of 1857-58 when Johnston's Army was disrupting Mormon affairs, but there must have been a civil marriage, or a civil divorce would not have been necessary. To complicate the issue, there are serious errors in Henry Brizzee's record in *FamilySearch* regarding this couple. As of October, 2020, *FamilySearch* shows without documentation a marriage of an Eliza G. Smith (b.1842), daughter of Orrin Smith and his *first* wife, Wealthy Maria Merriman, to H. W. Brizzee in California around 1858. That is an error. Eliza G. Smith did not exist. She was not listed with the family on the *Brooklyn* and she was not in the 1850 census, which shows "*E.F. Smith, 8 Y.O. female.*" I think that was a different child, Erothis Francis Smith, a male mislabeled a female. There is ample evidence for his existence. In fact, he appears later in our story, but there is no evidence for Eliza G.

stayed in California for over a year running a hotel and saloon between Sacramento and Placerville under the alias of James B. Brown, keeping under cover because the former Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs, who had blamed the Mormons for attempting to assassinate him, was living in Sonoma and knew of Rockwell's presence.[36] In August Rockwell escorted Lyman part way home through the Indian infested Humboldt Valley, and then returned to work at Round Tent and Half-way House. On September 5, 1850 Orrin Porter Rockwell set out for Utah with Charles C. Rich, killing a marauding Indian on the way and arriving safely in Salt Lake City after 37 days on the trail. The very day that Rich and Rockwell left Placerville, Hiram Gates (who was no longer with Emily Amanda Rockwell) died in Glenwood, California, a boom town at the heart of the mother lode on the road between Placerville and Sacramento. I wonder what he died of, and whether Orrin Porter Rockwell was the cause. This coincidence was not noticed by either Schindler or Achilles--I wonder if I'm the only one who has noticed.

Henry Brizzee and Emily Rockwell had two boys before divorcing in Alameda the day after Christmas, 1856. She stayed in California, but he made his way back to Utah in 1857, where he married Ellen Hopkins Smith.

Returning to 1859, in order to serve as a credible witness in the divorce, Samuel must have known both Ellen and Henry, which suggests that he may have been in Salt Lake City before George and his family arrived in March. Just six days after the divorce was granted Ellen married Lewis Newell, and shortly after that the Newells moved to California, where they had two daughters.

On November 21, 1859 Samuel married a young Mormon woman named Emily Woodmansee.[37] He was 34 and she was 25. A short announcement appeared in the *Deseret News* a week later that the marriage had been performed by Elder Franklin D. Richards, one of the apostles. How the two became acquainted is not known. My theory is that they developed a relationship the previous year in American Fork while Samuel worked with his brother George on the Sirrine Mill, which they were building for Emily's brothers. This may also help to explain Samuel's acquaintance with the Orrin Smith family, for a year earlier on July 24, 1858, Ellen Hopkins Brizzee's step-sister, 21 year old Amelia Ann Smith had married Joseph Woodmansee, Emily's older brother.

The Woodmansee family was already well known in Salt Lake City. Six orphaned Woodmansee children had arrived together from Iowa in August of 1853 with a

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[36] Harold Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, University of Utah Press, 1966, p. 194.

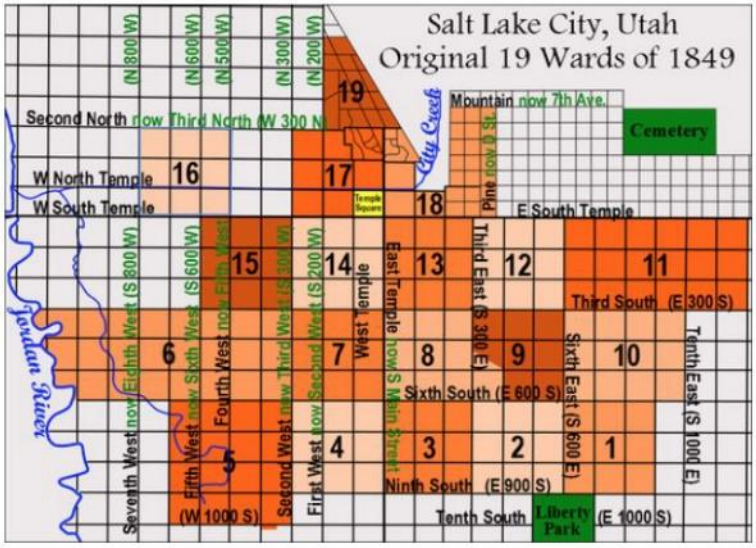
[37] Not to be confused with Emily Rockwell.

considerable amount of money from the sale of their parents' farm, which they invested in a house and in a promising business.

Their parents, James Woodmansee and Sarah Terrell, who met and started their family in Highland County, Ohio, had moved to the thriving Mississippi River town of Burlington, Iowa in 1838 with six young children when Emily was only four years old. There they owned a large and successful farm on the river's west bank. Burlington is about 30 miles upriver from Nauvoo, and 15 miles north of Augusta, the nearest Mormon Stake, but Emily's parents and also her mother's older brother Joel Judkins Terrell, who seems to have moved with them from Ohio, joined the Mormon Church. That probably happened around 1845, when their oldest boy Joseph was baptized in Montrose, Iowa at the age of 19. When Emily was 12 her mother died, and two years later so did her father, leaving her three brothers to manage the farm and the three young girls. The farm was substantial. At the time of their father's death it consisted of 717 acres with 21 cattle, six horses and 48 hogs. The 1850 census in Burlington listed 23 year old Joseph Woodmansee as the head of the family with a farm worth $3,000, which was the most valuable in his neighborhood. The nearest 25 farms averaged $940. Also listed in the household were Charles, age 21, Henry, age 20, Emily, 16, Mary, 14, and Sarah, eight years old. Two houses away lived the Roylance family, who were Mormons from Montrose. They had defected from a Mormon wagon train headed to Utah in 1846 to settle near the Woodmansee farm in Burlington. In 1853 the Woodmansee brothers sold out and caravanned with William and Mary Roylance and their four children to Council Bluffs. There they joined a 37 year old widow named Catherine Houtz Boyer and her adult brother with her six pre-teenage children in a small wagon company of 23 people led by Orson Spencer and none other than their uncle Joel Terrell. On his way back from a mission in Europe, Elder Spencer was probably only the titular leader of the company. Uncle Joel was by then an experienced waggoneer who had left Burlington before the death of his sister to cross the plains in 1846, joining the Mormon Battalion as a 45 year old man. He left the battalion early in Santa Fe as a member of the "sick battalion," which joined the vanguard pioneer company to enter the Great Basin on July 24, 1847. Brigham Young sent him to Council Bluffs in 1850 to serve as a Captain of 50 in the Warren Foote Company, so this would be his third crossing.

Emily and Mary Ellen were baptized the first day of January, 1854, fairly soon after arriving in Salt Lake--Emily was 20 and Mary Ellen was 18. Eleven year old Sarah Ann was baptized that August. There is no record of Charles ever being baptized until he received his endowment in the Salt Lake Temple in June, 1895. Being the second child, Charles tended to go his own way. Leaving his siblings in Salt Lake, he went on with his Uncle Joel to

Mound Fort,[38] on the Ogden River just north of Ogden, where Joel made a permanent home. Charles stayed there a while and bought some land in anticipation of a permanent move, but returned to Salt Lake. The six Woodmansee children lived there together for several years just as they had in Burlington, turning some of the money from the sale of their large Iowa farm into a good house in the Salt Lake City 14th Ward, near where George and Samuel Sirrine later located. The Salt Lake 14th Ward was probably the most prominent of all the original 19 wards laid out by the pioneers. It bordered on Temple Square and was the home of seven of the 12 apostles including many familiar Mormon names such as George Romney, Phineas Richards, Parley P. Pratt with his several wives, Orson Pratt, W.W. Phelps, John Taylor and his wives, Mathias Cowley, Amasa Lyman, Anthony Ivins, Nathan Tanner, David H. Cannon, Wilford Woodruff, and Franklin D. Richards.[39] The Woodmansee boys managed ever-growing herds of livestock



[38] Mound Fort is located around Childs Avenue and 10th Street in the north part of present day Ogden, just west of Washington Blvd. Built around 1853 around an Indian burial mound, it was in those days surrounded by a ten foot high wall of stone and adobe and occupied by about 16 families. It was abandoned as a fortification in 1855 when Brigham Young ordered the occupants to move into the larger Ogden Fort, which surrounded 42 blocks in the center of present day Ogden. Fort Ogden became unnecessary in 1857 after the end of the Indian War.

[39] The 14th Ward is where the Relief Society was re-established after it had been discontinued in Nauvoo on March, 1844. Eliza Partridge Lyman referred in her journal to the first meeting of the Fourteenth Ward Relief Society, established June 6, 1854, immediately following Brigham Young's announcement that ward Relief Societies should be formed to assist with Indian relief. Lyman wrote: "The sisters in the Fourteenth Ward (of which I was a resident) met at the school house with their Bishop Abraham Hoagland, to be organized into a society for the purpose of carrying out more thoroughly the instructions of President Young. Sister Lydia Partridge was appointed president and Phebe Pratt secretary. Others were appointed to visit the sisters of the ward and ascertain what they were willing to give toward clothing the poor Indians." Sister Lyman recorded making "a small gift to the society for the Lamanites," some "five yards of factory cloth, but I hope to be able to give more soon." On June 17, when Secretary Pratt resigned, Lyman became secretary and served in connection with her mother, President Lydia Clisbee Partridge. The group apparently disbanded during 1854 or 1855, after the immediate need for clothing Indian women and children had been met. In September, 1856 Bishop Hoagland reestablished the Female Relief Society in the Fourteenth Ward, this time with Phebe Carter Woodruff as president. Two counselors, a secretary, a treasurer, a visiting committee, other officers, and a total of 127 members made a substantial organization. Woodruff's husband, Wilford, a member of the

west of Salt Lake and Ogden and a promising general store. There were very few cash transactions in those days, so they were willing to accept grain or livestock in trade, which did much to grow their ranching enterprise. There was no advertising in the newspapers for the store before 1860. If they were operating it soon after their arrival as their biographer claims, it was probably modest in the 1850's as they concentrated on ranching.

READ! READ!! READ!!!

THE Subscribers having purchased the Entire Stock of Messrs. Irwin & Young respectfully announce to the citizens of Utah that they are prepared to sell, wholesale or retail, at

GREATLY REDUCED PRICES.

The STOCK consists in part of

DRY GOODS, GROCERIES, HATS, CAPS, BOOTS, SHOES, READY-MADE CLOTHING, FANCY GROCERIES, HARDWARE, &c.

A choice lot of Liquors, which will be sold to dealers at a low figure.
Country merchants and others will do well to give us a call before purchasing elsewhere.

WOODMANSEE & BROTHER,

At the old stand of Irwin & Young, East Temple St.
G. S. L. City, Jan. 23, 1860.—47tf

One month after the marriage of Samuel and Emily came the first of many appearances of the Woodmansee family business in the Salt Lake City newspapers on January 25, 1860--an advertisement in the *Deseret News* and an accompanying announcement that Woodmansee brothers had purchased the entire stock of merchandise of Irwin and Young on Main Street. On May 23rd the *News* carried a less welcome story:

> Charles Woodmansee, John Paul and John Henderson, who were in the riotous company that disturbed the peace of the city on the night of the 14th inst., by breaking into the house of Mr. James Brown[40] in the 14th Ward and whooping and shooting as they rode through the streets, were before Alderman Clinton for trial on Wednesday and fined, Woodmansee $50, and Paul and Henderson $10 each and costs.

I would love to know how and when the Woodmansee family crossed paths with Samuel Sirrine. At the latest, it must have been by the summer of 1858 that work on the Sirrine Mill in American Fork began and Joseph Woodmansee married into Orrin Smith's family.

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, noted in his diary that he attended the women's meeting on June 17, 1857: "In the afternoon I attended the 14 ward female relief society at my House with Robert Campbell we both addressed the meeting there were about 50 present sewing knitting sewing carpet rags making quilts &c it is a laudable undertaking all the females in the ward meet at my house each Wednesday afternoon they open & close with prayer Mrs. Phebe W. Woodruff is President & Mrs. Pratt Secretary they clothe all the poor in the ward & during the last quarter they made a Donation to the perpetual Emigrating fund of $126. I wish all go & do likewise." The exodus for Johnston's Army in 1858 spelled a temporary end for the Relief Society, which would not be active again for another decade, when Brigham assigned Eliza Snow to permanently revive it. Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward Relief Society, Report, 1856–1858, as Published in "Relief Society in the Early Days," July 1, 1895).

[40] This James Brown was not Porter Rockwell. No alias was needed for Rockwell in Utah.

Joseph actually married two women that day. The other bride was Lavinia Hawkins, who had been living in Payson as one of the Salt Lake City evacuees that spring. Lavina's brother was Brigham Young's secretary, who may have set her up to marry Joseph. She had previously been married to a man named John Hyde, whom she had known in London. Hyde apostatized after arriving in Utah, despite being sent to the Sandwich Islands on a mission to reform him. He finally returned to England and unsuccessfully sought a civil divorce from Lavina there in 1864. They had been married in Utah on November 10, 1853 and had two boys who died as infants. After Brigham Young gave her a church divorce from Hyde, she married Joseph. Lavinia Woodmansee later became a successful actress.

With Joseph's two new wives and a newborn child from each by the summer of 1859 the Woodmansee siblings must have soon been crowded out of their house in the 14th Ward. It appears that Samuel Sirrine stepped in with a solution, possibly even before his marriage to Emily Woodmansee that November. On July 12, 1860 the Utah census showed Samuel Sirrine as the head of a household in the Salt Lake City 16th Ward. The members of the household were his new wife Emily and all of her siblings except Joseph.

Samuel's house must have been commodious, for it also held four boarders. It was valued at $3,000,[41] the second most valuable house in the entire ward, however at that time many of the houses in Salt Lake City were very primitive. The largest house in the ward must have been a mansion, valued at $20,000. It was owned by William C. Staines, a wealthy merchant. Of the 582 people in the 16th Ward, only four families lived in houses worth at least $2,000 and most homes were valued in the hundreds. In addition to their real estate, adult males were required to state the value of their personal estate. Samuel's was estimated at a whopping $4,000, raising the question of how he acquired such a fortune. One clue: both Charles and Henry Woodmansee also reported a personal estate of $4,000, suggesting that Samuel may have become an equal partner in the family business--all three designated themselves as "merchant." Except for Staines, they were the richest men in the ward including their neighbor Alfred Cumming, the gentile Governor of Utah, whose personal worth was $2,000.

The 1860 census shows that Joseph Woodmansee was still living with his wives Amelia and Lavinia and their two girls in the family's previous house in the 14th Ward. Joseph did not give an estimate of the value of his estate. George Sirrine was there too, declaring his occupation to be "machinist." Samuel's nephew Theodore Sirrine, now a 21 year old miller, was living with George's family.

[41] The modern equivalent would be $94,000.

On August, 4, 1860 Woodmansee and Bros. advertised the sale of a large amount of stock obtained from another general store on East Temple[42] named Hord & Dickson, consisting of cloth, clothing, hats, boots, dry goods, food, powder, lead, and an assortment of liquors. The brothers appeared to be systematically buying out their competition. They were accepting cash, but "a few yoke of good work oxen would be taken in exchange for our goods."

On September 5th Samuel and Emily received their endowments at the Endowment House on the northwest corner of the temple block. Emily was pregnant with their first child, Ellen Sarah, who would be born February, 9, 1861.

Salt Lake Endowment House

About a year later, Samuel was memorizing lines to the first play performed in the Salt Lake Theater as a member of the Deseret Dramatic Company,[43] of which his sister-in-law Lavinia Hawkins Woodmansee was also a member. The first play was a 3-act comedy *The Pride of the Market* in which Samuel played a supporting role as Preval. He had only a single line: "The Marquis de Volange? From the King," after which he delivered a written message. Lavinia played Mademoiselle de Volange. Each performance was followed by the "laughable farce" *State Secrets* in a single act with Philip Margetts, perhaps Deseret's most famous actor, and five other players. In the farce Samuel Sirrine played Master Hugh Neville, one of the main roles.

Samuel's scene as Preval

The Salt Lake Theater was built in 1862, instigated and owned by Brigham Young. About half of the expense was covered from a government auction of large quantities of supplies from Camp Floyd when the army left Utah to participate in the Civil War. The theater was lit by 385 oil lamps dispersed throughout the building. Every performance opened with prayer. Smoking and drinking were prohibited and firearms were checked at the box office. Instead of popcorn, attendees ate parched corn

Salt Lake Theater around 1862

[42] Modern Main Street.

[43] A *Deseret News* article of March 8, 1912 lists many old members of the company.

and dried fruit. Ticket prices ranged from 50 to 75 cents for the better seats, but produce was also taken in exchange. Actors worked without pay and were expected to learn several plays a week. During the first eight years the theater reportedly produced more than 500 plays, farces, and operas.[44] [45] Plays had been performed in the Bowery in Salt Lake as early as 1850, and after that in Social Hall, but it could only seat about 300. The theater building was on northeast corner of First East[46] and First South. Its capacity was about 1,500. The interior was renovated in 1873, fashioned in the style of a European opera house with two boxes overlooking the sloping stage. Among the visiting players were P.T. Barnum, the Barrymores, Sarah Bernhardt, Al Jolson, Buffalo Bill Cody, and Oscar Wilde. It hosted Democratic and Republican caucuses and conventions and grand balls accommodating 200 dancers at once.

From the time of Samuel's arrival in Utah he was required to be involved in the Territorial Militia. Most, if not all, of the states had militias, but in Utah, military service was mandatory for every male aged 18-45 unless specifically exempted by federal law. The men were paid $3-5 dollars per day of service according to rank with a bonus of 50 cents if they supplied a horse. They were expected to provide their own weapon and could be fined $5-20 for missing drills or not being properly equipped. Utah's militia, called the Nauvoo Legion in memory of the army headed by Joseph Smith to protect the Mormons in Illinois, contained Nauvoo veterans, Mormon Battalion veterans of the Mexican War, and many others, numbering about 12,000 men and officers. They were required to attend weekly drills or training meetings as platoons or companies throughout the territory in town squares or vacant lots in wards. In addition, there were general musters lasting three days called once or twice a year, in which the militia paraded and drilled in uniform and participated in sham battles, which drew large crowds of onlookers, who participated in festive parades and military balls. These were enthusiastically reported in the newspapers. The responsibilities of militia men went far beyond practice and drilling during crises, which included Indian wars in the first years of the territory as well as the Walker War in 1853 and the Blackhawk War of 1865-1870. They were also called up to respond to the threat of Johnston's Army in 1857-1858. Many of the officers of the militia were drawn from the ranks of sheriffs and police forces, and the higher officers were also priesthood leaders of the Mormon Church. The supreme commander of the Nauvoo Legion from 1852 to its decline in 1870 was Lieutenant General Daniel H. Wells, who also served as the Mayor

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[44] Kenneth L. Alford and Robert C. Freeman, the Salt Lake Theatre, Brigham's Playhouse from Scott C. Esplin and Kenneth L. Alford, Salt Lake City, the Place which God Prepared, BYU Studies, 2011.

[45] Joseph Smith had organized a dramatic company in Nauvoo in the early 1840s which performed in the multistory Cultural Hall also known as the Masonic Hall on Main St. in Nauvoo. Brigham Young himself had appeared there in the play *Pizarro* in a non-speaking part as the High Priest in robes of scarlet and gold.

[46] Now State Street.

of Salt Lake City and as a Mormon apostle and counselor to Brigham Young in the Presidency of the Church.

In June, 1862 a large number of Salt Lake Militia men were recruited to participate in a posse to free three members of a religious sect called the Morrisites[47] who had been imprisoned in their compound, a previously abandoned fort at the mouth of the Weber River. The group had ignored a writ of habeas corpus commanding the prisoners' release issued by John F. Kinney, the federally appointed Chief Justice of the Utah Territory, and now the acting Federal Governor, Frank Fuller,[48] had ordered Robert T. Burton, the Deputy U.S. Marshal, who was also the commander of the Salt Lake territorial militia, to arrest the Morrisite leaders. Because the Morrisites were in a fort, a very large posse was created and equipped with two cannons. The Salt Lake militia was joined by 500 additional militia members from Kaysville, some of whom had already been involved in their own hostile interactions with the Morrisites.

Robert Taylor Burton

Among the 500 Salt Lake militia men in the posse was Samuel Sirrine. Samuel was an eyewitness to the entire affair, which went horribly wrong.

The Morrisites refused entry to the compound, so the posse stationed the cannons on two small ridges overlooking the fort and ordered them to surrender within 30 minutes. When the group failed to respond in time, Marshall Burton ordered two warning shots to be fired from the cannon. The second ball ricocheted off the ground and into the fort, where the

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[47] Joseph Morris was an English convert to Mormonism, who claimed to receive revelations naming him the Seventh Angel from the Book of Revelation. He began collecting followers in 1860 and was excommunicated in February, 1861 after suggesting to Brigham Young that they should be co-leaders of the Church. That April 6th he organized the Church of the Firstborn and gathered his followers to Kington Fort on the Weber River, which had been abandoned two years earlier. Morris had predicted that the second coming was imminent, and his group was waiting for the millennium without planting crops in 1861. As repeatedly revised end-of-the-world dates passed, there was internal dissention and some members were lost. The men in the sect had refused to drill in the Mormon militia and many of their cattle were seized. Morris ordered a raid upon Mormon stock and then captured their owners, who were disaffected former followers, and held them hostage.

[48] Frank Fuller was a school friend of Abraham Lincoln's son Robert. He was a dentist, physician, and newspaper man. Fuller had been sent to replace Governor Cumming, who had quit the job without notice and gone home to Georgia on May 17, 1861. Governor Fuller had the distinction of sending the first telegram from Salt Lake City, which he addressed to President Lincoln. Fuller made a lasting friendship with Mark Twain during a visit to Virginia City. The governor tried to avoid friction with the Mormons through strict enforcement of Territorial laws. Lincoln had instructed Fuller in dealing with Brigham Young: "If Brigham leaves me alone, I will leave him alone."

group had gathered in their bowery while their leader prayed for angels to come to their rescue. The cannonball killed two women and severely injured a 12 year old girl. Some of the Morrisites returned fire, killing a member of the posse. A day later, the group put up a white flag, and Burton entered the fort on horseback with a small contingent of militia, which included Samuel. What happened next is controversial, and many different accounts have been collected in the subsequent legal investigations. Apparently Burton sensed a threat and shot Morris dead, and then killed two women when they assailed him verbally for attacking Morris. Morris' counselor, John Banks, was shot in the neck. The wound was not immediately fatal, but Banks died a short time later in the tent of the posse's physician, Dr. Jeter Clinton, who was subsequently accused of murdering his patient. All told, ten Morrisites and two militia men were killed in the encounter.

After freeing the three jailed apostates, ninety Morrisite men were captured and marched back to Salt Lake City to stand trial. Seven were convicted of second-degree murder a year later and 66 for resisting arrest, but a new federally appointed Territorial Governor pardoned them all three days after the trial. In 1869 Robert T. Burton was tried for the murder of one of the women, but acquitted by a jury that was equally comprised of Mormons and Gentiles.[49] That trial only inflamed the controversy over the affair, which was revived by another investigation in 1877 involving Samuel Sirrine, which I'll mention later.

The *Deseret News* reported in November, 1862 that Joseph Woodmansee and his brother had arrived back from "the northern mines with a snug little fortune and not a little of the 'dust'" and a large number of mules and wagons. The next spring *Deseret News* announced the arrival of a Woodmansee and Bros. train of about 16 mule teams with merchandise from the California southern route. The brothers were teaming up with Charles Crismon, George Sirrine's father-in-law, who was the most prominent freighter in the territory.

Joseph Woodmansee

On April 5, 1863 a second girl named Alice was born to Samuel and Emily Sirrine, who died at 17 months of age. Sarah, their other daughter, died one year later.

That summer, Samuel's brother George moved to Ogden to build a grist mill for Loren Farr, who was then Stake President, and later the mayor. In

[49] In 1862, the year of the Morrisite incident, Robert T. Burton was appointed by President Lincoln to be Collector of Internal Revenue for the District of Utah. He went on to become the bishop of the Salt Lake City 15th Ward and later a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of the Mormon Church, where he served from 1874 until his death in 1821.

September, George Sirrine and his older boys were among the first settlers of Bear Lake Valley. George returned in the spring for the younger children and his wife Ester Ann, who had stayed with the Crismon family in the 14th Ward. During that winter she bore and lost a baby boy whom she named Seth after Samuel's older brother, who had died at the age of 28 just before the Mexican War.

Charles Woodmansee

It was in 1864 that Woodmansee brothers broke up their partnership "by mutual agreement." According to their family historians Joseph and the youngest brother, Henry, were comfortable just running the store, while the energetic second son Charles was a big thinker and restless. It had been Charles who managed the branch store operations throughout the state and their herds of livestock on large Woodmansee ranches in Skull Valley, 10 miles from Shambip, Rush Valley south of Tooele, and on ranges west of Ogden. Ever since the family's arrival, Charles had remained attached to his land in Mound Fort, and now he would move there permanently. In September he married, and the following year he erected an adobe store on the west side of Main Street in Ogden. In 1869 he replaced it with a large rock building, which became an important Ogden landmark. The next year he built Ogden's first theater, which competed with Brigham's Salt Lake Theater, and he spent the next 11 years developing it. Charles Woodmansee became a leading citizen of the city and a wealthy developer of real estate. Meanwhile Joseph and Henry expanded the Salt Lake City business. A brief article in the *Union Vedette*[50] on June 16, 1865 mentioned Woodmansee's new building. On September 6, the *Deseret News* wrote:

> The new fire-proof store of Woodmansee Bro. is completed. The building is 80 x 29 feet, red sandstone, two stories of 14 ½ feet in the clear with a basement story or extensive cellar running the entire length of the building. The front is of cut stone, something of a Roman style and certainly is very handsome, adding to the architectural appearance of the street 'where merchants most do congregate'...We should estimate the cost at a trifle under $50,000. The

Woodmansee Bros. Store

[50] The *Union Vedette* was published by the U. S. Army between 1863 and 1867, first from Camp Douglas, and later published in the city—its editorial policy was anti-Mormon.

previous store was on East Temple one door north of the Pacific Telegraph Company office.

That building on East Temple evolved into the new ZCMI Cooperative in 1869. Joseph was a member of the organization and served on its board during 1871-2.

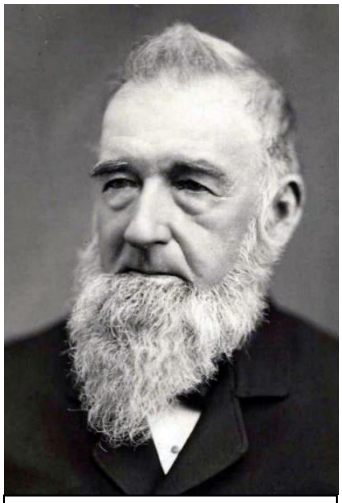
Seth Blair

The break-up of the Woodmansee brothers' operation would also have involved Samuel, and by April 28, 1864 he was no longer a merchant, but working at the city's leading hotel, the Salt Lake House, probably as the manager. It appears to me that he may have been bought out of the store by Joseph and Henry Woodmansee when Charles left, and possibly applied his equity to the hotel, which had changed ownership two months earlier, purchased by Brigham Young and his nephew Feramorz Little. The Salt Lake House has an interesting history. It had initially been established by another member of the 14th Ward, Seth M. Blair, a publisher and attorney.[51] He had been appointed the first U. S. Attorney of the Utah Territory by President Millard Fillmore. Blair's building stood on the east side of East Temple Street between first and second south[52] just a block south of Woodmansee Brothers. He began advertising the hotel in November, 1853 but just six months later he was announcing the sale of "a used ornamental hotel sign and post" and the closing of the hotel. He proffered an invitation to all concerned to settle business with him, as he had been called on a mission.

[51] Before becoming a Mormon, Seth Blair had served as a Major in the famous Texas Rangers under Sam Houston. In November 11, 1857 as Johnston's Army was advancing toward Utah, Blair wrote to Houston, who was serving as a U.S. Senator in Washington, D.C. to try to resolve the "Utah War." As a result, Senator Houston spoke in Congress against the invasion of Utah, quoting Blair's letter. President Buchanan immediately dispatched two official "Peace Commissioners" to help settle the conflict. One of them was Major Ben McCulloch, a boyhood friend of Blair's from Tennessee. When they arrived in June, McCulloch asked for Seth Blair, who had relocated during the evacuation of the Salt Lake Valley to Fillmore. Blair returned immediately and was instrumental in negotiating peace with army. Blair later founded the pro-Mormon newspaper *The Mountaineer* to oppose the army's *Valley Tan*. See Seth Blair's Memories in Family Search.

[52] Now 143 South Main, the location of the Eccles Theater Complex.

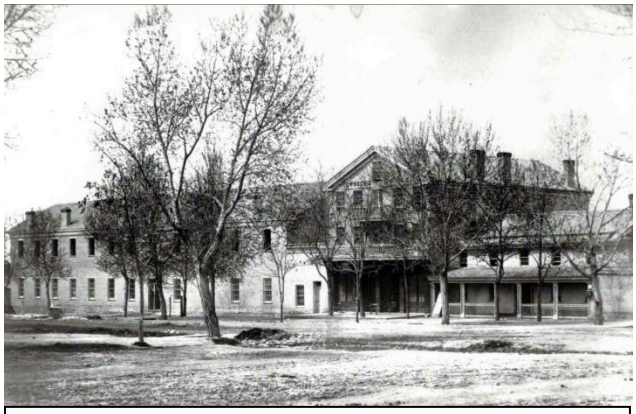
July 4, 1856 was the opening of James Townsend's new and improved Salt Lake House. The former missionary companion of Wilford Woodruff in the Fox Islands of Maine had bought the property for $750 in 1855. Townsend, who had come to Utah in 1852, was a builder by trade and probably completely remodeled the building. I'm not sure how or when the property came to him from Blair, but Townsend was said to have had Independence Day flags flying and a large bell made from Iron County iron to ring in the national holiday. Sir Richard Francis Burton, a famed Victorian explorer and writer, later visited the Salt Lake House in the summer of 1860 and gave this wonderful description:



James Townsend

> Nearly opposite the post office in a block on the eastern side, with a long verandas supported by trimmed and painted posts, was a two-storied, pent-roofed building, whose sign-board, swinging to a tall, gibbet-like flagstaff, dressed for the occasion, announced it to be the Salt Lake House, the principal, if not the only establishment of the kind in New Zion. In the Far West, one learns not to expect much of the hostelry; I had not seen aught so grand for many a day. Its depth is greater than its frontage, and behind it, secured by a *porte cochere*, is a large yard for corralling cattle. A rough-looking crowd of drivers, drivers' friends, and idlers, almost every man openly armed with revolver and bowie-knife, gathered around the doorway to greet Jim (Townsend) and "prospect" the new lot; and the host came out to assist us in transporting our scattered effects.
>
> We looked vainly for a bar on the ground floor; a bureau for registering names was there, but temperance, in public at least, being the order of the day, the usual tempting array of bottles and decanters was not forthcoming; upstairs we found a gentile ballroom, a tolerably furnished sitting room, and bedchambers, apparently made out of a single apartment by partitions too thin to be strictly agreeable. The household had its deficiencies; blacking for instance, had run out and servants could not be engaged till the expected arrival of the hand-cart train. However, the proprietor, Mr. Townsend, a Mormon from the state of Maine who had married an

> Englishwoman, was in the highest degree civil and obliging, and he attended personally to our wants, offered his wife's services to Mrs. Dana, and put us all in the best of humors, despite the closeness of the atmosphere, the sadness ever attending one's first entrance into a new place, the swarms of "emigration flies" (deer flies) and a certain populousness of bedstead, concerning which the less said the better. Such, gentle reader, are the results of my first glance at Zion on the tops of the mountains, in the Holy City of the Far West.[53]



Townsend House

As noted by Sir Richard, the hotel had no bar until it was sold in 1864 for $25,000 to Brigham Young and Feramorz Little, who added liquor and a bar, ostensibly to prevent other establishments from doing so. But within a year or two the main street was lined with bars. Townsend spent a third of the money from the sale to build a new hotel, the Townsend House, in the 14th Ward on West Temple next to Charles Crismon's house and where the Salt Palace now stands, and it replaced the Salt Lake House as the most popular hotel in town for the next 10 years until Townsend lost it in a legal dispute. He bought the Warm Springs a short time after the Robinson affair, which we will discuss shortly, and operated them until his death in 1886.

A series of advertisements appeared in the Salt Lake newspapers after the hotel was acquired by Brigham Young and his nephew. The new hotel owners owned the contract for the U.S. mail route from Salt Lake City to Pocatello and were looking for paying passengers to ride in the mail coach. Those interested in traveling to East Bannock were to sign up with Samuel D. Sirrine at Salt Lake House.

> Passengers (will be) conveyed in splendid four horse Troy coaches, and the balance of the way in light spring wagons to Bannock, with express to Virginia, Nevada, and Gallatin cities and mining districts east of the mountains. Leaving twice weekly on Mondays and Thursdays.

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[53] Richard Burton, *City of the Saints,* 1860.

Lavinia Hawkins Woodmansee

Emily Hill Woodmansee

On May 7, 1864 Joseph Woodmansee took a third wife, Emily Hill, who had walked to Utah with the Willey Handcart Company. Like Joseph's second wife Lavinia, the marriage was evidently arranged by The Brethren. Emily had a five-year-old girl and was in need of support after being abandoned by her first husband, Dr. William G. Mills in 1857, who apostatized during a mission to England and never came back. Joseph and Emily were sealed by Heber C. Kimball. Emily Hill was a poetess and L.D.S. hymn writer of renown. Judging from the Salt Lake City newspapers, toward the end of his life Joseph took a back seat to his two artistic wives, who were continually mentioned. Actually, around the time of his marriage to Emily his fortunes began to slide, perhaps because of competition with ZCMI but also through weak management on his part. His brother Henry never seemed to take a major interest in the mercantile business and went on a mission to England during Joseph's difficult time of 1867-69. Henry brought home a bride named Etta Parr. They had four children before Henry died at the age of 46 in 1876. Joseph got involved in debt and lawsuits, and later lost money in mining speculations. His first wife, Amelia Smith, died of cancer in 1885. His third wife Emily stepped in to salvage their financial situation, developing a successful real estate business. At the time of Joseph Woodmansee's death in 1899 one of his daughters wrote from her home in California: "I hope some of his oldest friends will speak (at his funeral) as he is not altogether a Mormon." But despite his failings, he seems never to have lost standing in the Mormon Church as evidenced by the speeches of several notable church leaders at his funeral, namely Franklin D. Richards, George Q. Cannon, George Romney, and Angus Cannon.

On November 9, 1864, a death notice ran in the *Deseret News* for Alice, "daughter of Samuel D. and Emily Sirrine, aged 1 year, 3 months, and 10 days" who died of "cholera infantum."[54] Her older sister Ellen Sarah would die about a year later on Oct 25, 1865. Altogether Emily and Samuel lost four of their first five children, all girls who died between the ages of 22 months and 3½ years.

[54] That would now be called gastroenteritis, which in third world countries remains a leading cause of infant death, but it is readily treatable with oral or I.V. fluid rehydration, one of the cheapest, most effective, and most under-rated discoveries of modern medicine.

Samuel Sirrine became a polygamist on March 1, 1866, marrying Emily's younger sister, Mary Ellen Woodmansee, who was then 29 years old. Apparently Mary Ellen had lived in the Sirrine household since 1859, so the union is not surprising to me. I wonder whether it surprised Emily. No diaries or biographies of Samuel, Emily, or Mary Ellen have ever come forth to illuminate the question. It was not uncommon for Mormon polygamists' wives to be related to each other, so perhaps the marriage was some sort of practical solution ordered by their bishop, Abraham Hoagland. At the time of the second marriage, Emily was four months pregnant with Samuel F., who was born in August and lived to become an adult. Mary Ellen's first baby, whom they named Fanny, was born three months later on November 16, 1866, exactly 37 weeks after the wedding. Mary Ellen's luck with keeping her babies alive was not much better than her sister's. Mary Ellen's first three children died before the age of two, so there was a lot of sorrow on that account in the Sirrine family during the 1860s. She delivered two more children in the 1870s, both of whom lived to adulthood, Anna and Orson.

On June 28th Samuel's mother Sarah Hannah Garrison died in Cold Springs, New York. News probably came to Samuel immediately by telegraph, which had been in use in Salt Lake City since 1861. The telegraph office was next door to the Woodmansee building.

In October 1866 Samuel became involved in another dramatic murder, which put the Mormon community even more at odds with the Gentiles.

A young physician named John King Robinson had finished his military service as assistant surgeon at Camp Douglas, married a young Mormon woman, and hung out his shingle to practice medicine in Salt Lake City. For a Gentile to marry a Mormon girl was not a promising start for a young professional in Salt Lake City in those days, but he complicated his life in Zion in several important additional ways.

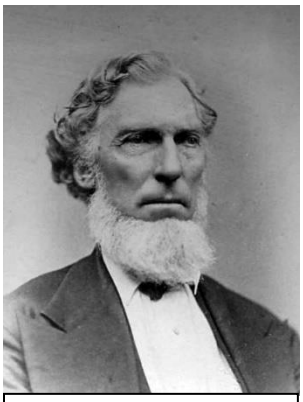
First, he was an active member of the Congregational Church, which met in Independence Hall on the corner of Third South and East Temple. The building could seat 200. Independence Hall was the brand new home of the Congregationalists, where the first service had been held November 18, 1865. It featured the spellbinding anti-Mormon preacher Rev. Norman McLeod, who had been appointed by General Patrick Connor to be Chaplain of his Army command at Camp Douglas. Robinson was the Sunday school superintendent, one of three doctors in the small congregation. In addition to church and Sunday school activities, Independence Hall hosted literary, fraternal, political, and civic meetings, dances, programs, and schools. It housed Jewish, Catholic, and various Protestant churches. The entire Gentile community used it.

Second, he was at odds with the Salt Lake City Council over property. He had his eye on the warm springs west of what is now called Capitol Hill on Beck Street. These had been popular with the early pioneers, but had fallen into neglect, and the title to the land was

ambiguous. When Utah became a territory in 1850, the federal government's survey supplanted much of the original pioneer layout of the city, especially un-subdivided areas outside of the original ward boundaries. Thinking that the unoccupied springs would be an attractive addition to his medical practice, Dr. Robinson made a claim on them and built a building. Without warning, the police tore down the building and ejected him from the premises.

Robinson also operated a "bowling saloon" in Salt Lake, which made a lot of noise and attracted an element which irritated some of his neighbors. After dark on October 11, 1866 that building was destroyed by 20-30 men with their faces painted black, but bystanders identified the Police Chief Andrew Hill Burt[55] and two of his deputies among them, who were bound over for investigation.

Two weeks later the *Deseret News* reported that Chief Justice Titus ruled against Robinson in his suit for the Beck Street warm springs land. Robinson gave notice that he intended to appeal the case. The next evening on the advice of his attorney, the doctor went to the house of Mayor Daniel H. Wells to inform him that he intended to hold the city responsible for the damage which had been done to his property. When Mayor Wells, the Lieutenant General of the Nauvoo Legion and Counselor to Brigham Young realized whom he was talking to, he literally threw the impertinent young doctor out of his mansion.



Daniel H. Wells

Later that evening of October 22, 1866, Doctor Robinson was awakened from his bed by a pounding on the door at about eleven pm. There a stranger, who identified himself as "John Jones," told the doctor that his brother's leg had been broken by a fall off a mule, and that he was in extreme pain and required immediate medical care. The doctor grabbed his coat and bag and trotted several hundred feet south from his house on East Temple, just a block south of Salt Lake House, to 3rd South, where Independence Hall stood on the southwest corner. There he was attacked by several men. A shot was heard and a wild shriek. The assailants were seen running in all directions from the intersection. There were many

[55] Ironically, Burt, who had served as Salt Lake County Sheriff since his arrival in 1851, was shot outside the Salt Lake House 17 years later in 1883 by a crazed black former soldier named Sam Harvey, who was subdued by none other than the famous black Mormon priesthood holder, Elijah Abel. A mob of 2,000 watched the police beat Harvey with clubs and brass knuckles. When word came that Sheriff Burt had died, Harvey was released to the crowd, who hung him and nearly killed some citizens trying to calm the crowd down. Harvey's skin was flayed off and apparently his internal organs were removed. His skeleton was buried outside, even beyond the paupers section of the cemetery. See Connell O'Donovan, *Let This Be a Warning to All Niggers," The life and Murder of Thomas Coleman in Theocratic Utah*, June 2008, p. 18.

witnesses because the circus had just finished its performance, but none could identify the killers. Robinson was carried to his house, where he died about 3 am.

The next morning Justice Clinton held a coroner's inquest at Independence Hall. Seth M. Blair, the initial owner of the Salt Lake House, was the prosecuting attorney. Major Charles H. Hempstead, the U. S. Attorney and former editor of the *Union Vedette,* was the doctor's attorney. The original organizer of the Nauvoo Legion in Utah, Hosea Stout, represented the city. This case was much bigger than just a murder. It became a judgement on Utah culture, a showdown between Mormons and Gentiles.

One of the six coroner's jurors chosen to hear the case was Samuel D. Sirrine.

Another name drawn for the jury was James Townsend, the second owner of the Salt Lake House. However, Blair challenged Townsend. I imagine this was because of the former business relationship between the juror and the prosecutor. So Nelson Bokoufsky, a 27 year old liquor dealer who had immigrated to Utah from Prussia, was impaneled in his place. The others were James Hague, a 43 year old British gunsmith, R. C. Barratt, a 29 year old furniture dealer, a man named W. W. Henry, and John B. Kimball, a 43-year-old from New Hampshire, the senior partner in Kimball and Lawrence Mercantile and Freighting operation, known in town as the "gentile merchant."

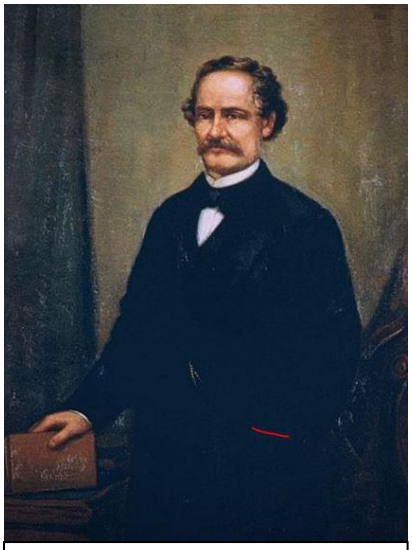
The coroner reported that Robinson had received a two-inch gash on the head by a heavy blow from a hatchet or Bowie knife, another on the back and left side of the head, two stabs under the left eye, and a gunshot wound under the left eye passing through the skull behind the right ear, shot by a large derringer or heavy revolver. The doctor had not been robbed, suggesting a different motive, probably political.

The entire police force of the city had been at the circus until 11 pm, and then gathered at City Hall. Chief Burt testified that he sent four officers immediately to the scene, who took charge of the victim, went after a doctor, remained there an hour, and then retired to bed. No search was made for the assassins, and after two o'clock there was no watchman on duty at all, whether to patrol the streets or to seek or discover the murderers. The Chief testified that he discovered the next morning that no one had been up to the widow's to enquire about the person who came for Dr. Robinson, and did not himself go to the scene of the murder until the third day afterwards. It was made known in the hearing that there existed secret ward police consisting, according to one witness, of

Chief Andrew Hill Burt

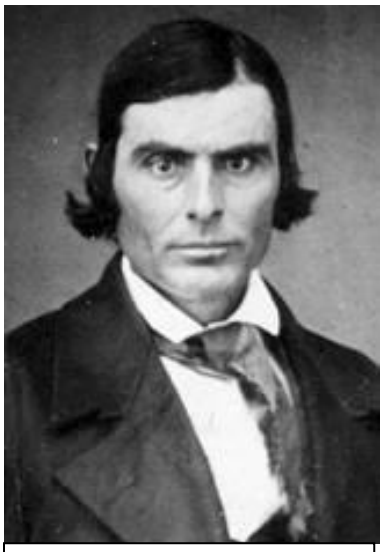
500 or so, "comprising nearly everybody in town," but they were not called upon Monday night or at any time since, and little or nothing had been done to track the murderers.

On October 31st a brief account of the assault was summarized low on a page of the *Deseret News* without a headline, ending with a pious wish that the assailants might be caught. The *News* expressed criticism of the court for pressing the Chief of Police on what means he had adopted to discover the assassin, maintaining that such information should be kept secret to aid in the investigation. The next day the paper carried a brief notice of a citizens' reward of $7,000 for apprehension of the murderers plus $2,000 more offered by the city and county. Brigham Young had personally chipped in $5,000. The *Union Vedette* dismissed the offers as a disingenuous ploy to divert attention from a cover-up.



Gov. John B. Weller

The testimony of witnesses was heard by Samuel and the other five members of the jury over the next three weeks until the inquest ended on November 6th. The closing arguments of the Honorable John B. Weller, former Governor of California,[56] who had been called in to aid Major Hempstead, and of Hosea Stout were published in both the *Union Vedette* and the *Deseret News* on November 8th and 14th. Weller gave an eloquent speech, rehearsing the facts of the case, after which he asked the jury to consider whether the police might have acted differently, had it been Hosea Stout that was murdered. Would the 4,000 Mormons in the city have been asked the following Sabbath to aid in ferreting out the assassins? Did Dr. Robinson have any enemies except the city authorities and the police officers bound over on the charges of riot for destroying his bowling establishment? Would every one of a dozen witnesses be at a loss to identify even a single fleeing assailant? Hosea Stout gave a closing statement in response. He defended the city as having no motive to kill Robinson, having already justly won their case against him, and noted that the three policemen accused of destroying the bowling alley were awaiting their own day in court, though in his opinion as their attorney, innocent. Surprisingly, he admitted that "everyone knows that there are in the city...combinations,



Hosea Stout

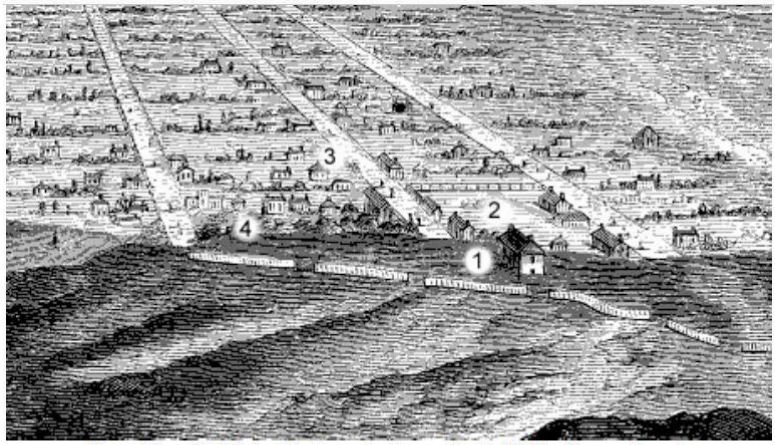
[56] Portrait by William F. Cogswell.

and I know it, but have no proof sufficient for a court of law....They have covenants that the members will not testify against each other in courts of justice and they do as they please in spite of the law...why was this not enquired into...?" instead of inquiries into the city and the police. In defending the city government and the police, Stout seemed to confirm the existence of what critics were calling "avenging angels of Mormonism."

The *Deseret News* wrote further, "The jury retired to consult on their verdict. Their verdict was to the effect, that the deceased had died by the hands of some persons unknown to the jury" and declared (evidently in rebuttal to the words of Hosea Stout) "in the most emphatic manner...that there are no such combinations among the old settlers here."[57]

Two days later, Fanny Sirrine was born to Samuel and his second wife, Mary Ellen Sirrine.

The following month yet another murder occurred which was totally ignored by the *Deseret News*[58] and merited only a brief notice in the *Union Vedette* and the *Salt Lake Telegraph*. The victim was a person whom Samuel Sirrine knew well and worked with every day.



View of Great Salt Lake City from what is now Capitol Hill looking southward, from Sir Richard Burton's, *City of the Saints*, p. 201

1 – The Arsenal building
2 – "Temple Block" with Endowment House and old Tabernacle
3 – Salt Lake House hotel
4 – Lion House and Beehive House (Young's residences)

On December 12, 1866 a black man named Thomas Coleman,[59] who worked as a porter at the Salt Lake House was killed two miles west of Salt Lake City by at least three assailants, his throat slit, and stabbed in the chest with his own Bowie knife, and left on Capitol Hill at the arsenal building[60] with a placard reading "Notice to all Niggers. Take warning. Leave white women alone." Sheriff Burt's deputies didn't retrieve the body until 28 hours later with the aid of oil lamps under cover of darkness, although two young boys had found and reported the body the afternoon of the killing. A hastily organized coroner's jury, whose foreman was a noted Mormon vigilante named George Stringham, concluded

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[57] *Deseret News*, November 14, 1866.

[58] To be fair it should be noted that the *Deseret News* did not publish another edition until January.

[59] Connell O'Donovan, Let This Be a Warning to All Niggers," The life and Murder of Thomas Coleman in Theocratic Utah, June 2008.

[60] Now the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum.

after a single meeting that Tom must have been found in the company of a white woman by her friends or relatives, who immediately killed him in a fit of rage at or near the place where he was found dead. The body was buried three hours after the inquest in a pauper's grave outside the cemetery just 18 hours after the police retrieved the body. The *Vedette* wanted to know how the jury could have determined who the killers were, and if the murder was crime of passion, how the carefully lettered placard came to exist, which suggested premeditation. Critics of Mormonism have later claimed without proof that Orrin Porter Rockwell was one of the three men who killed Coleman, in obedience to Brigham Young's statement[61] on the requirement of blood atonement for those guilty of miscegenation. There was speculation that since Coleman was an employee of Brigham, the offense might have been against one of the prophet's daughters.

It seems possible that the killing was deliberately made to appear a racist act, but was actually designed to stop Tom Coleman from naming John King Robinson's assailants.[62]

The following month on January 15, 1867 the Deseret Telegraph Company completed 500 miles of wire which connected Logan to St. George. On April 24th the *Deseret News* reported a fire in the basement of Joseph Woodmansee's store from a candle, which ignited fumes from a vat of varnish and turpentine being poured by an employee. Joseph suffered minor burns as he stifled the fire by beating it with burlap bags before his panicked employees could return with water.

On May 24, 1867 Samuel was reportedly sued for debt in Salt Lake City by A. B. Sands and Company. As nearly as I can determine, this was a mail order company that sold proprietary medicines out of New York City. In September Samuel D. Sirrine's cattle brand was registered by Utah Territory. It was a letter D enclosing an S, to be displayed on the left shoulder of the animal. I suppose that he was running his own cattle with the large Woodmansee herds. His livestock could also be identified by a square piece cut out of the end of the left ear. Samuel was now listed as living in the prestigious Salt Lake City 14th Ward, having moved from his boarding house in the 16th Ward. By this time, the only unmarried Woodmansee sibling was Sarah Ann, the youngest, who, although she would not marry until 1870, was 24 years old and probably independent, so a boarding house was no longer necessary.

On December 22, 1867 Emily bore another girl named Jesse, who would live 22 months, and four months later Mary Ellen bore Mary. The two half-sisters would die four days

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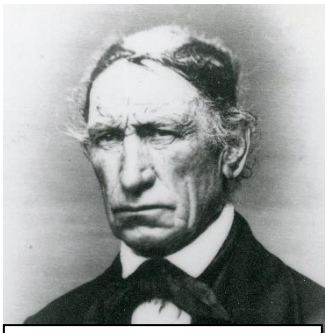
[61] Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1. p. 110, also Wilford Woodruff Journal, entry between January 4, 1852 and February 8, 1852.

[62] Harold Schindler also mentions the theory that the real motive was that Coleman had been discovered seeking out federal officials volunteering "important evidence" on the Robinson murder. See Harold Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, University of Utah Press, 1966, p. 342.

apart. Samuel was still working at the Salt Lake House, where he continued through most of 1869. In May of that year, the Transcontinental Railroad was connected at Promontory Point.

On July 29, 1869 Samuel's father Isaac Sirrine died in Cold Spring, New York. The *Putnam County Courier*, ran the story.



Isaac Sirrine, Jr. 1773-1869

> **Shocking Casualty**: On Thursday morning, the men on the train due here, going north, at 9 o'clock, brought the intelligence that a man had been run over at Garrisons, while walking upon the track. In a short time, it was found to be one of our old citizens, Mr. Isaac Serrine (sic), whom we had seen nearly every day during the season walking feebly and aimlessly about our streets. The poor man having been instantly killed, Coroner Truesdell was summoned, and the jury gave a verdict in accordance with the above mentioned facts.

At the October General Conference of the Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, a long list of mission calls to about 140 men was announced over the pulpit. Samuel D. Sirrine's name was among them. I can imagine the effect that must have had on him and his wives.

A few of the new missionaries were unmarried, but most were mature men including about a dozen currently serving bishops and luminaries such as Angus Cannon, Lot Smith, and Parley P. Pratt. Those who wrote of it described the mission as a "brief mission to the Eastern States." It seems that the Church was experimenting with a new program of short mission callings, taking advantage of the extremely efficient travel afforded by the new railroad system. Several of the men kept missionary journals, which helped me to understand the nature of the project. The missionaries were almost all born in eastern states, and their missions chiefly consisted of visiting their non-member family members and friends from their past. Most went without companions, but they tended to travel by rail to and from their missions in groups of up to 30 men. Most stayed a bit longer than Samuel; the average return date was late March, 1870.

Samuel was set apart as a missionary by Charles C. Rich on October 10, 1869. Although Rich was living in the Bear Lake Valley, he was in Utah at the time because he was serving in the Territorial Legislature even though his home was actually in Paris, Idaho.

Several missionaries wrote to Brigham Young or George Q. Cannon, editor of the *Deseret News*, to report their experiences. Elder Theo. McKean wrote to Elder William Clayton on December 5, 1869 to report that Captain Hooper was very ill in New York City with a "bronchial attack," which McKean suspected was actually full-blown pneumonia. Several

brethren had visited him including Brigham Young, Jr. from Philadelphia and from New York, R. T. Burton, F.F. Sheets, S. D. Sirrine, H. W. Brizzie, N. A. Empey, and B. Groo, all of whom were in good health.

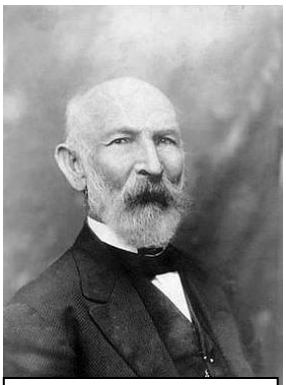
My guess is that Samuel visited his sister in Philipstown, some old friends, and his two brothers in Trumansburg. Perhaps he also visited his former wife Cate and their son, Charles M., who would have been 17 years old by then. He reported no baptisms, although some of the missionaries did. Elder McKean noted that there seemed to be "...not a very great anxiety on the part of the people to hear or investigate the Truth," preferring to discuss polygamy and investment opportunities in the west.

While Samuel was on his mission, an interesting article appeared in his home town newspaper, the *Putnam County Courier* on November 27th.

> Samuel Sirrine, formerly of Philipstown and at one time we believe, collector of that town, is at present keeping hotel at Salt Lake City and living in full communion with Brigham Young and his church. Some of our "boys", who were traveling with Bailey's Circus in the west, visited his house during the past season, and while being entertained by the host, were introduced to three ladies, who each claimed to own a third interest in aforesaid Samuel.

If Samuel visited Philipstown, the *Courier* was evidently not aware of it. I would like to have seen their surprise to see him walk into the newspaper office in person. The third lady mentioned by the "boys" was probably Sarah Ann, the youngest Woodmansee sister. As far as I know, she never married Samuel, but she could certainly have been living in the Sirrine household while the circus was in town. Shortly after Samuel's return from his mission Sarah Ann married John Francis Hardie on March 22, 1870.

There was a lot of upheaval in Utah during the short duration of Samuel's mission. Just after he left, the Church excommunicated a number of prominent business and professional men known as the Godbeites, named for their organizer, Salt Lake businessman William S. Godbe. Chiefly British-born converts to the Mormon Church, the Godbeites were involved in spiritualism, having consulted the long deceased Joseph Smith in séances, and sought unsuccessfully to recruit his son Joseph Smith III to lead them. They eventually settled on Amasa Lyman, one of the Mormon apostles, who had been interested in their ideas, especially spiritualism, since his mission in England in the early 1860s. The group arose largely around opposition to Brigham Young's co-op movement, which they regarded as anticapitalistic and bad for their businesses. By January they had established the *Salt Lake Tribune* newspaper, which quickly became the arch adversary of the *Deseret News* and a thorn in the



Fred T. Perris

side of the Church for over a century. The editor-in-chief was Fred Perris, a commercial photographer and surveyor,[63] who had broken with Brigham Young after a dispute over payment for surveying portions of the transcontinental railroad contracted to the Church. A month later the Godbeites and many Salt Lake Gentiles including General Maxwell created the Liberal Party, the first political party in Utah.

It was also in January that the last spike was driven to complete the Utah Central Railway, joining the transcontinental railway in Ogden with Salt Lake City. On February 2nd, women in the Utah Territory were given the right to vote. Opponents felt that this was an effort by the Church to ensure a political majority.

Samuel arrived home from his mission on February 1, 1870. He had been back in Utah only three months, when a son named Joseph Sirrine was born to Mary Ellen. Little Joseph died that fall at four months of age.

The United States census was counted again as of July 22, 1870. It showed Samuel living in the 14th Ward with $4,000 in real estate and a personal estate of $500. Evidently his job at the Salt Lake House ended when he went on his mission, for his occupation was now given as a butcher. His household included Emily with their four year old son Samuel and Mary with her infant Joseph. But evidently Emily did not stay there much longer. Probate court records of Salt Lake County indicate that a divorce was granted to Emily Woodmansee on September 21, 1870. This date was also confirmed much later in Samuel's pension application.[64] This is a puzzle, since Samuel and Emily had two more children together after that time: Leon Sirrine was born in 1872 and Mable Sirrine in 1875, and later when they died their father's name was recorded on their death certificates as Samuel D. Sirrine.

During the next year or two, Samuel turned his interest to mining. The *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* reported on November 29, 1870, that he had been prospecting in the Camp Floyd district and called on the newspaper with specimens of good milling rock, leaving them a gift of "a pretty piece of feldspar." The prospect there was said to be good for milling ores, principally silver. The following September, 1871, the same paper reported that S. D. Sirrine, Daniel C. McGlynn, and P. Lawler were owners of a silver mine in Little Cottonwood Canyon called Ruby Mine. "These are men of means as well as large experience in mining." I suppose that part of Samuel's "large experience" came from the San Diego coal project with his brother George. The same month a mining correspondent to the *Salt Lake Daily Review* reported on his visit to Samuel's camp above Alta, writing,

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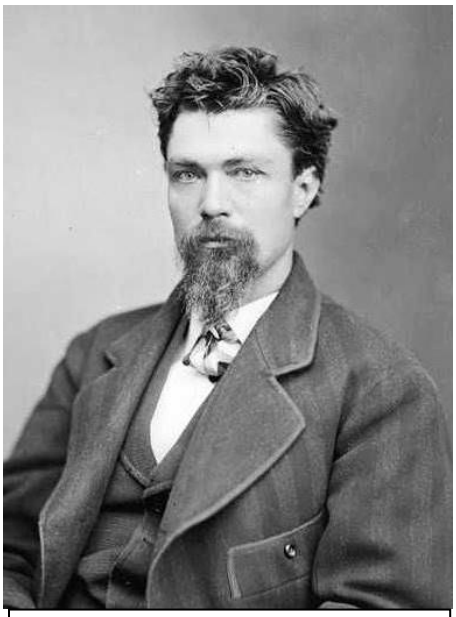
[63] It was a survey by Perris in 1863 that revealed that parts of the Mormon settlement in the Bear Lake Valley were in Idaho, not in Utah as assumed. The city of Paris, Idaho was named after him.

[64] Samuel's first wife Cate's divorce from him happened to be made legal by the Tompkins County, New York Supreme Court on May 3rd the same year.

"From new comers and old the testimony is universal that they regard this camp as the best prospect in Utah—all ores of high grade." Samuel's partners were both from San Francisco. Lawler was a carpenter. McGlynn, a contractor, had been living in San Francisco since at least 1850, so he could have known Samuel's brothers John and George Sirrine while they were living there, and perhaps that was his connection to Samuel. McGlynn had claimed substantial financial means in the 1860 San Francisco census--$16,000 in real property and the same amount as personal estate. He was born in New York City, and by 1872 he had left the West for good and returned to live in his birthplace for the rest of his life. Evidently the Ruby mine did not pan out.

On December 14, 1871 the *Salt Lake Tribune* announced the sensational news that Salt Lake City Chief of Police Alexander Burt and two of his deputies, James Toms and J. L. Blythe had been arrested by the U.S. Marshal and charged with the murder of Dr. John King Robinson six years previously. Two men had appeared from out of state, who claimed to have been eyewitnesses to the event on a business visit to Utah. The case was swiftly brought before the Chief Justice of the Utah Territorial Supreme Court, James B. McKean, who had been appointed the prior year by President Ulysses S. Grant with the specific mission to abolish polygamy. The federal prosecutor was George C. Bates, U.S. Attorney. He was assisted by General George R. Maxwell, an authentic Civil War hero, who had taken part in the organization of the Liberal Party. At this time Maxwell would have been 32 years old. He had served in the Civil War at Gettysburg, having become a general in one of the Civil War's most renowned groups, the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. He was known as the "Thunderbolt of Sheridan" and had won the prestigious Custer Medal after being badly wounded eight times, missing a hand and a leg. While recovering his health in Michigan, General Maxwell earned a law degree before he was appointed in 1869 by President Grant to serve as Register of Land of Utah Territory. His mission was to resolve the conflicts between the pioneer and territorial surveys. He served in Utah for 20 years, becoming U.S. Marshall in 1873-1876, and was at the center of much of the conflict between Saints and Gentiles.[65]



General Maxwell

[65] See John Gary Maxwell, *Gettysburg to Great Salt Lake, George R. Maxwell, Civil War Hero and Federal Marshal among the Mormons*, Arthur H. Clark Company, Norman, Oklahoma, 2010.

The trial was held in the Woodmansee building. The first witness, Charles W. Baker, claimed to have seen the two deputies passing him on the street after the shot had been fired, as one of them attempted to hide a large knife or sword under his short coat. Although from out of town, he recognized them from the day before when one of them sold him vegetables and the other repaired a revolver for him. Another witness, Thomas Butterworth, testified that he had heard a man hailed as "Brig", later shown to be Brigham Young Hampton. Butterworth jumped behind some bushes after hearing the gunshot and cry of "murder" and recognized Alexander Burt as one of the fleers. He knew neither of them personally at the time but met them a month afterwards when he got work at the railroad. There were 27 witnesses in all, many vouching for the accused policemen and poking holes in the witnesses' stories. A witness for the defense named John Kramer, who had recently spent 11 months in the penitentiary, testified that C. W. Baker, who had identified Blyth and Toms, had confided in Kramer that he wanted to swindle the officers. It was discovered that Baker had a prison record as well. Chief Burt had an alibi—he was home playing checkers. People testified that B. Y. Hampton was too sick to run a block as Butterworth had claimed.

A month into the trial Baker, the star witness, was arrested for perjury. Five days later he signed an affidavit that he had been paid $500 to give false testimony and was to receive $1,000 for each man convicted. The *Tribune* responded: "Which time was the perjury: the first or the second?" But the policemen were found innocent and the federal officials had lost their best chance to get justice for Dr. Robinson's murder. To this day the case has not been solved. There would be many such cases in the next two decades.

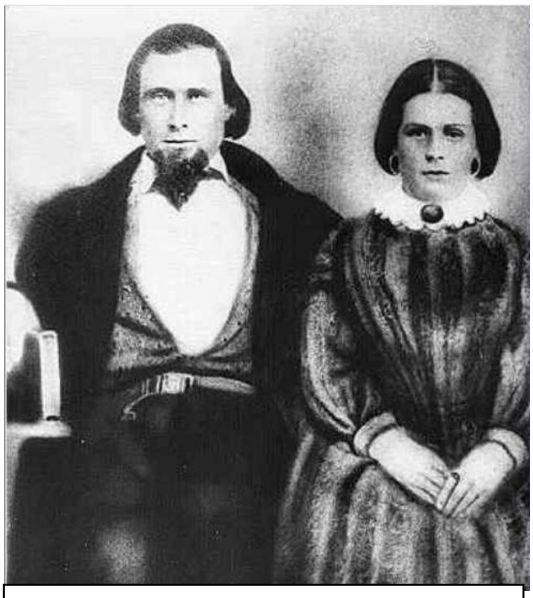
On June 16, 1872 Samuel was mentioned in the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* as a delegate from Utah County to the Territorial Democratic Convention for the purpose of electing delegates to the national convention and selecting a Territorial Democratic Central Committee. He was not elected to either. I have no idea why he would be representing Utah County unless he was still connected to the Sirrine Mill in American Fork Canyon. It appears that he was not yet a member of the new Liberal Party.

That November a new steam fire engine was publicly demonstrated in Salt Lake City. In addition to the agents of the manufacturers, Samuel Sirrine who was noted to be a "practical engineer," was reported also to be there, where a large crowd of spectators witnessed the show. The *Deseret News* opined that now that the efficiency of the new engine had been demonstrated, it was presumable that an able fire company would be organized.

On Valentine's Day, 1873 a baby named Orson was born to Mary Ellen Sirrine.

Bingham Canyon had been an ideal place for herding cattle and for cutting timber since 1848. In 1863 gold and silver were found there. The Bingham and Camp Floyd branch of

the Utah Central Railroad was completed in 1873, which drastically changed the mining situation in Bingham Canyon. Transportation of heavy equipment became viable, and lode mining of rich discoveries began in earnest. Mills and smelters were built and Bingham Canyon became a prosperous mining region and a boom town. As mining grew, so did crime. On September 24, 1873 Samuel was sworn in as one of 12 jurors in probate court in the case of The People vs. Butcher and Taylor. This case also turned out to be politically important and may have deepened Samuel's entanglement in the conflict between the Mormons and the Territorial Government.



Samuel Butcher and Sarah Catherine Hickman about 1854

The case involved a triple murder on a ranch at the mouth of Bingham Canyon, in which after an argument, Samuel M. (Saul) Butcher gunned down 53 year old Gabriel L. Cotton and his sons, Gilbert, 21 and Gabriel Jr., 19 in front of their family. Butcher was a son-in-law of the notorious Mormon enforcer Bill Hickman, who had turned against Brigham Young. The murder occurred five years after Hickman's excommunication and two years after his much read confession of 1871, which had been used in federal court to implicate Brigham Young and the Church-influenced law enforcement system. Butcher was acquitted, evidently because the Cottons had come armed to his house to confront him, and it was claimed that one of the sons had first tried to shoot Butcher, but his gun had misfired. Butcher was later indicted by a federal grand jury on August 3, 1877 for the same crime, but not tried again because the Poland Act[66] passed by the U.S. Congress in 1874 to reform the Mormon judicial system, could not be used to reverse decisions by prior courts. But the Feds found another way to get to Butcher. On September 12, 1887, he was arrested for unlawful cohabitation. After he promised to obey the law in the future and paid a fine of $50 he was released.

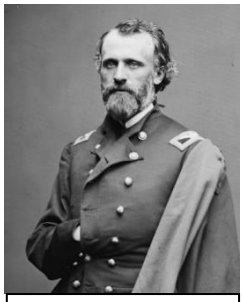
[66] The Poland Act of 1874 was an act of the United States Congress which sought to facilitate prosecutions under the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act by eliminating the control members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints exerted over the justice system of Utah Territory. Sponsored by Senator Luke P. Poland of Vermont, the Act redefined the jurisdiction of Utah courts by giving the United States district courts exclusive jurisdiction in Utah Territory over all civil and criminal cases. The Act also eliminated the Territorial Marshal and Attorney, giving their duties to a U.S. Marshal and a U.S. Attorney. The Act also altered petit and grand jury empaneling rules to keep polygamists off juries. By removing Latter-day Saints from positions of authority in the Utah justice system, the Act was intended to allow for successful prosecutions of Mormon polygamists. From Wikipedia.

In 1874 Samuel Sirrine was listed in the Salt Lake City Directory as an engineer, but in August he took up law enforcement for, as far as I can determine, the first time since his work in in Philipstown, New York, twenty years earlier. He became a deputy sheriff of Salt Lake County. Although he probably did not foresee it, his work in law enforcement turned out to be a dangerous move for him, further involving him in the fight between Church authorities and the federal government.

On October 5th the *Deseret News* reported:

> Mrs. Adams, wife of Brother John Adams of Bountiful was shot dead while sitting by the table, reading the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. The weapon used must have been a shotgun loaded with slugs or cut up lead. (She) was a good, faithful, inoffensive woman.

Samuel Sirrine was assigned to investigate.



James B. McKean

The very same day the newspaper detailed the selection of a grand jury for trials involving polygamy. Chief Justice James B. McKean was presiding in the first term of the Third District Court under the Poland Act and the public was greatly interested. U.S. Marshal Smith was acting as court crier. Eleven cases were called up. The most explosive case involved one of Brigham Young's younger wives, Ann Eliza Webb, who had obtained a divorce several years earlier, and was now suing her husband for alimony. General Maxwell was one of her attorneys. She had just returned from a nationwide speaking tour, promoting her autobiography titled *Wife No. 19*, a popular exposé of Mormonism and polygamy.

Unsurprisingly, Samuel D. Sirrine was called to serve on the grand jury. However this time he was excused because of his job of deputy sheriff of Salt Lake County.

The murder of Mrs. Adams put Samuel back in the newspapers that fall. The *Ogden Semi-Weekly Junction* wrote on October 17th, "Officers Sirrine and (Martin) Florida are working up the case and think they have a pretty good clue which they intend to follow."[67] The *Deseret News* of October 21, 1874 also reported on the case. "Sheriff Jesse Smith of Davis County was working with Sirrine and Florida, but could find no evidence to implicate the Perkins brothers, the first suspects." There was no more reporting on that case that month,

[67] Samuel's partner, Deputy Martin Florida, was a Civil War veteran, having served in an Illinois regiment and been captured. He had lived in Council Bluffs in 1870 working as a grocer, and was senior to Samuel as a deputy, having been an officer for at least nine months. In 1880, Martin Florida lived in the Salt Lake 7th Ward, working as a "travelling agent for agricultural instruments." He had moved to Grand Junction, Colorado to farm by 1885.

but there were rumors among the gentile community that Bishop Call in Bountiful had suppressed the case to protect a priesthood holder in his ward.

On November 20, 1874 General Patrick Edward Connor,[68] the commanding officer at Fort Douglas, organized a Mexican War Veterans' Society in his office. Samuel Sirrine was elected secretary, H.W. Brizzee was vice president, and General Connor himself was president. There were seven veterans present at the initial meeting. All who served on "the right side" of the Civil War were invited to join.

General Connor

On December 11, 1874 Samuel was in the news again. On that day the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported the story of a dispute between Angus Cannon, a prominent Mormon leader and brother of the Apostle George Q. Cannon, and one of his tenants, Sarah Rogers, for debt before the Mormon justice of the peace, George Crismon. Crismon took the matter under advisement instead of rendering a decision, and then in the absence of Mrs. Rogers and her attorney, Judge Tilford, placed an execution order into the hands of Deputy Sheriff Sirrine. In the meantime, Cannon, in the company of Daniel H. Wells, went to the house on First South, locked Mrs. Rogers out and watched from across the street as a "guard of Mormon bullies" began confiscating her furniture and other property. Her attorney appeared and threatened them. Deputy Sheriff Sirrine, who still held the execution order, "generously volunteered to protect Mrs. Rogers from the foiled scoundrels" and to allow her a day's time to present her appeal of Crismon's judgment to the (gentile) district court, which Angus Cannon had hoped to avoid. Serving as deputy, Samuel had stood against important Mormons.

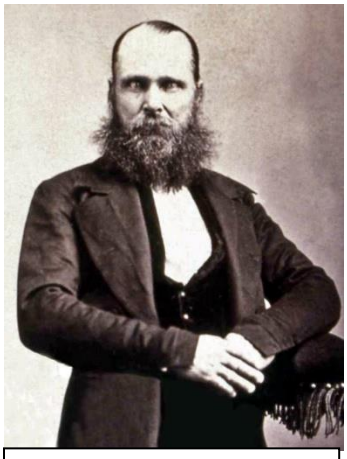
Angus M. Cannon

Of course, not all of his police work put him between the warring factions. From the news reports, he seemed to be a remarkably successful and courageous officer. On January 26, 1875, the *Deseret News* reported that Samuel D. Sirrine was pursuing a gang of horse

[68] Against the objections of the Mormon community, Colonel Patrick Edward Connor with seven companies of his Third Regiment of California Volunteers established Camp Douglas in 1862, named in honor of the Little Giant, Stephen A. Douglas. Connor executed four Indian prisoners in December, causing much unrest in Cache Valley, which led to the infamous Bear River Massacre on January 29, 1863 in which 14 of his men were killed, 49 wounded, and 79 suffered frozen feet, killing 224 Shoshone near Preston, Idaho. He had hired Orrin Porter Rockwell as a scout, who after the battle commandeered ten teams and sleighs from the Mormons in Preston to haul the wounded soldiers to Camp Douglas. The dead were hauled in baggage wagons. This action let to Connor's promotion to General.

thieves to Laramie. He was accompanied by Thomas Abel Starrh, a Mormon and the owner of the stolen animals. Deputizing the victim of horse thieves was a frequent practice in those days. On February third the *News* reported that the robbers were in custody, but Deputy Sirrine was still looking for the mules. A few days later he returned with two horse thieves named Robert McCausland and James Dougherty and nine mules.

On February 11th, the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* reported that Deputy Sirrine brought James Campbell to the city to answer the charge of assaulting and beating Samuel W. Moore in Bingham. Campbell was fined $25. A week later Samuel arrested William Bean and George Smith for stealing mules, horses, and commissary stores from the U.S. Army at Rawlins, Wyoming. On February 19th, Sirrine surrendered the men to Sheriff Rennie in Wyoming. An Ogden newspaper mentioned that the two men were in the same gang as the previous arrests by Samuel.


Orrin Porter Rockwell

After this flurry of activity Samuel was mysteriously absent from the newspapers for the next three months. However, on May 12, 1875 the *Deseret News* reported that Ben Tasker, another accomplice in the theft of Starrh's mules had been jailed. Samuel was not mentioned--evidently he had been removed from the case. On the same day it was reported that a "valuable stallion" belonging to Mr. Adam Sharp (brother of John Sharp, U.S. Marshal) was ridden fifty miles from Rush Valley (near Grantsville) out into the desert, when several young men caught up to him. He fled on foot. They fired and didn't hit him, but he finally was stopped by a "young man named Rockwell, to whom he surrendered." Evidently both Orrin Porter Rockwell and Samuel Sirrine served as sheriff's deputies at the same time.

The very same day the following brief notice appeared in the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican:*

> Deputy Sheriff Sirrine mysteriously disappeared about a week ago. Family and friends are considerably exercised. Report any news to Sheriff Taylor.

On May 13th the paper followed with this:

> Deputy Sheriff Sirrine has been heard from, but not found. Last week a gentleman from this city rode with him to Humboldt Wells,[69] on the Central Pacific. Sirrine

[69] Now called Wells, Nevada, this was a stopover for passenger trains where steam engines took on fuel and water.

> continued on his westward journey, saying that he was going on business, and would return in ten or fifteen days. Since that time no information of his whereabouts has been received.

On May 15th the mystery was compounded when Samuel's boss, Sheriff Stephen W. Taylor, posted a notice in the *Herald Republican* revoking and recalling the commission issued to S.D. Sirrine in August, 1874 as a deputy sheriff, warning people against putting processes in his hands for service. "...all service of legal papers made by him after this date will be illegal, null, and void; and I will not be responsible for his acts." He seemed as upset as Samuel's family, but for very different reasons. This notice was run in multiple papers for the next several weeks.

On May 19th the family ran another missing notice, this time in the *Desert News*. It was clear that the family had no clue what was happening. On the other hand, Sheriff Taylor seemed to know exactly what was happening, and he was alarmed. Just what was he upset about?[70]

Stephen Wells Taylor

Stephen Wells Taylor was forty years old, a decade younger that Samuel Sirrine, and he had been the Salt Lake County Sheriff for less than a year when Samuel joined the force. Taylor's election to the office of sheriff had been controversial, provoking a sarcastic report after the election in the *Salt Lake Tribune* on August 6, 1874 that Daniel H. Wells had "gotten himself elected sheriff" under an alias, calling himself Stephen W. Taylor in his new role. Wells was a chief target of the federal officials in Utah, occupying at that time the offices of Lieutenant General (highest ranking officer) of the Territorial Militia, mayor of Salt Lake City, LDS apostle, and second counselor to Brigham Young. He was the most powerful man in the Territory except the prophet himself.

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[70] Two years later the Bountiful murder was still being referred to in suspicion when on August 31, 1876 the *Salt Lake Tribune* wrote "when the widow Adams was murdered at Sessions, some of the neighbors were told by the Bishop not to follow up the track lest it lead to some of the brethren. Sam Sirrine endeavored to work up the case, and has ever since been missing. If Bishop Call is not a Danite, why does he counsel the blood-atoning of the Barnham brothers?"

To say that Sheriff Taylor was a protégé of Wells would be an understatement. He was a foster son, who had adopted the great man's surname as his own middle name. As a 12 year old boy Stephen had accompanied Wells to Utah, arriving on October 12, 1848 in the massive Brigham Young Company in which Wells was Aide de Camp. Both Wells and Stephen Taylor traveled without their family. Wells had left his wife and their eight year old son in Illinois. They had refused to go with him, and he never saw them again. Wells was 35 years old when he arrived, probably quite emotionally bound to young Stephen, but within four years he had married six women, all of whom lived together in the landmark Wells Mansion on the corner of Main and South Temple. Stephen Taylor was an orphan, whose parents had joined the Mormon Church in England and died in Nauvoo. He left behind two younger siblings, who never came west. The first territorial census two years later shows 15 year old Stephen living in the Wells household. Stephen served in Brigham Young's Minute Men,[71] and in 1856 he was one of the young men sent to rescue the stranded handcart company at Martin's Cove. He and Brigham Young Jr. were appointed to the important honorary role of flagbearers in the Nauvoo Legion. Together the two young scions were sent to Santa Clara by Brigham Young to supervise the banishment of the two criminals Ambrose and Betts, which led to the attack on John Tobin on February 18, 1857. Six months after Samuel Sirrine's disappearance, Stephen Taylor and Brigham Young Jr. would be specifically named by Tobin as his attackers in a vitriolic letter to the *Salt Lake Tribune* on Nov 12, 1875. Before his election as sheriff, Stephen was a farmer living in the Salt Lake City 12th Ward in a comfortable $3,000 house. His next door neighbor was Orrin Porter Rockwell. Taylor served only one term as sheriff, which ended in 1876.

Brigham Young Jr.

[71] "As a part of the law enforcement system of the State of Deseret, Brigham Young had created a small force of Minute Men who were prepared to leave at a moment's notice to pursue Indian or white raiders in order to recoup stolen cattle or horses. So efficient and dedicated were these young men that they began to take on a sinister aspect to those who observed the workings of the Mormon system from afar. Taking some license from the short-lived nonofficial Mormon vigilante group in Missouri, they were sometimes referred to as Danites or Destroying Angels. They played, and continued to play, a major role in western fiction, and many readers have imagined Brigham as a military dictator with a personal army of avengers who carried out his orders to capture, torture, and kill people who crossed him. But that Minute Men were anything more than a group willing to undertake arduous labors for their governor and church president has never been demonstrated." Leonard J. Arrington, 2012, *Brigham Young*, Doubleday, p. 250.

Except for the weekly notices from Sheriff Taylor denying responsibility for Samuel's actions there was no news of Samuel Sirrine until his name appeared July 17th in the "Jottings" column of the *Tribune*:

> Can the Church papers inform their readers what has become of Deputy Sheriff Samuel Sirrine, who so mysteriously disappeared from this city some time since? His sudden taking off looks very like the dark days of Blood Atonement.

They thought he was dead, executed by the "avenging angels of Mormonism." But Samuel was alive and still on the minds of both political factions.

Six weeks later on August 22nd a letter from a reader in San Francisco appeared in the pro-Mormon *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*[72] reporting that Sam had been spotted there. Having read the earlier article in the *Tribune* that suggested Samuel had been "foully dealt with," the writer reported that he had run across Sirrine and they spoke briefly. Samuel reportedly had been as far south as San Bernardino, where he had seen Fred Perris and others, claiming to have been after a violator of law of some kind or the other for General Maxwell, who at the time was the U.S. Marshall for the Utah Territory. After quoting the reader's letter, the reporter opined, "He...does not purpose to return to Salt Lake."

This, of course, implied that Samuel was in league with the leaders of the anti-Mormon faction in Salt Lake City. Fred Perris had resigned as editor-in-chief of the *Salt Lake Tribune* to start a newspaper in San Bernardino only months earlier.[73] And General Maxwell had dedicated his life to bringing the Mormons into compliance with federal law, so the target would have been a Danite or church official.

On August 24th the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* quoted a letter supplied to them by Sheriff Taylor from an anonymous writer in Folsom, California,[74] who reported that on July 5th a man calling himself Samuel Duncan had rented a saloon in a Folsom hotel and then left town. He allegedly showed up a few days later in Sacramento under the name of Thomas Jordon, where he undertook to sell the saloon that he had leased. Taylor's source claimed that a Sacramento attorney investigating the hoax discovered a bundle of legal papers in Folsom, which Duncan had carelessly left in his room at the American Exchange Hotel, all of

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[72] *The Salt Lake Herald-Republican* was owned by two elders of the Church, but promoted the paper as independent and neutral. It was sympathetic, but separate from the Mormon Church, and consistently reflected the views of the *Deseret News*. The *Tribune* derisively called it the "Mormon Herald" and the *Salt Lake Democrat* called it the "Church Echo."

[73] Perris had released the first issue of his new paper, the *San Bernardino Advertiser* on March 27, 1875.

[74] Folsom, California is 23 miles east of Sacramento on the Transcontinental Railroad line and was once the terminus of the Pony Express. Mormon Island, where gold was first discovered in California is within the city limits, although now covered by a reservoir, Folsom Lake. At the time it was a transportation hub to the gold mines for state and freight lines.

which were from Sheriff Taylor's office, and bore Deputy Sirrine's name. The *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* reporter concluded, "There is little doubt that the man Samuel Duncan *alias* Thomas Jordan, is Sam D. Sirrine, who has "gone to the bad."[75]

American Exchange Hotel opened in Folsom on June 26, 1875

Clearly the sheriff and the proxy newspaper of the Church were attempting to discredit Samuel with no evidence except the two anonymous letters. There was no explanation given for the seven week gap between the letter from Folsom and the sheriff turning it over to the newspaper. One wonders why the sheriff was going to such lengths—what did he have to gain? While I have no evidence to the contrary, I have learned nothing about Samuel which would suggest that he was stupid enough to leave such damning evidence behind when he left his hotel room, so I am admittedly skeptical about this story. I searched the California newspapers of that period without finding any reference to the alleged scam. However, if the story is true that Samuel was carrying documents from the sheriff's office, would it not support that idea that Samuel had left town to pursue his legitimate duties as a deputy, and not to flee the sheriff or his Danite henchmen?

If the anonymous story of the hoax is true (except the part about the incriminating documents in the hotel room), it seems possible that the names Samuel Duncan and Thomas Jordan were real people and not an alias for Samuel Sirrine. I was able to locate four adult males living in the general area[76] at the time named Samuel Duncan and two more named Thomas Jordan including a criminal on the loose named Thomas C. Jordan for whom a $1,000 reward had been issued.[77]

The *Tribune* countered in their "Jottings" column on October 26th, with a request: "Will the *San Bernardino Times* inform us whether or not SamL (sic) D. Sirrine, late Deputy Sheriff of Salt Lake County, has been seen in that place within the last six months?"

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[75] *Salt Lake-Herald Republican*, August 24, 1875.

[76] Samuel Creigh Duncan, son of Samuel Duncan in Petaluma, Samuel M. Duncan in Sacramento, and Samuel M. Duncan, Jr. in Sonoma.

[77] He had been on the run since January 17, 1884 for the murder of Golson Hickman.

Two weeks later the *Tribune* published John Tobin's letter from San Francisco accusing Sheriff Taylor and Brigham Young Jr. of attacking him in Santa Clara. However, Tobin's credibility was questionable inasmuch as he had spent much of the preceding decade writing and lecturing against Mormonism.

On December 5, 1875 in a long article the *Tribune* proffered its own theory for Samuel's unexplained disappearance with the headline: **Sam D. Sirrine, The Theory of his Mysterious Disappearance, Letters from the Stockton Insane Asylum.**[78]

> Some eight months ago, Sam D. Sirrine mysteriously disappeared from his friends in this city. At the time he was deputy sheriff of this county and his absence for a little time excited no suspicion, as it is not an unusual thing for officers in such positions to be gone from home for some days together and their whereabouts be unknown. A few weeks passed away, nothing was heard of him, and the rumor became current that he had been blood atoned by the priesthood. No one had ever dreamed that Sirrine would ever be singled out as a victim for slaughter, but there was in fact good reason why his brotherhood feared him. He was a member of the police force of this city when the branch of the Danite service was in active operations against the Gentiles, cutting them off from the land of the living almost daily, and it is believed that he was one of the parties who took an active part in the Murder of J. King Robinson, or at least knew all the facts concerning that heartless and bloody tragedy.

Then the *Tribune* came forward with its own anonymous letters.

> There are a number of anonymous letters in this office, the handwriting of which is precisely similar to Sirrine's own. The writer of these letters in them volunteers to lay naked the whole truth of the murder, and give the names of the secret and special policemen who perpetrated the crime, but he feared, as he himself states in one of his letters, to be known, even to his publishers lest he should be called upon the witness stand after which his days would be numbered. Accordingly, this matter there rested, and our anonymous friend remains...secure from the world behind his nom de plume, the keeper of his own secrets.

The editorial claimed that Samuel had been called in a year earlier by his bishop[79] for "daring to oppose the priesthood" by actively campaigning in the municipal election two

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[78] Salt Lake Tribune, December 5, 1875.

[79] Thomas Taylor, a Mormon convert from Oldham, Lancashire, England, had been ordained bishop of the Salt Lake 14th Ward on March 4, 1872. He had his own history of "daring to oppose the priesthood" but it had not yet fully bloomed. Not a relative of either Sheriff Stephen Taylor or of the apostle, John Taylor, who was a member of the bishop's ward, Thomas Taylor arrived in Salt Lake City in 1848, but moved to Lehi in 1855,

years previously for "the opposition ticket," which would have been the then two year old Liberal Party of the Godbeites, General Maxwell, and Fred Perris, the *Tribune* editor. As an inducement for Samuel to repent and agree to be silent, the bishop supposedly arranged for the job as deputy sheriff.

However the appointment to deputy sheriff, which put Samuel into intimate contact with the Danites,

if not into sworn membership, turned out to be problematic, since he proved to be taking the job seriously and evidently came to know too much. It seems clear that Samuel Duncan Sirrine fled for his life.

The *Tribune* continued:

> When he was missing last spring and his friends commenced making inquiry as to his whereabouts, it was whispered that he had been spirited away, to which probable fact the public attention was called. Immediately the Church prints came to the rescue of the Danite band, proclaiming its innocence by asserting that Sirrine had been seen in San Bernardino by Fred T. Perris since the time of his disappearance, but a denial from that quarter exploded this slimpsy (sic) excuse for his absence. The next yarn invested by them to explain away the suspicion of his friends was to the effect that he was wandering about in California in an insane condition, but the people of that state take care of their insane, and on writing to the Stockton Insane Asylum the following answer was received: "Insane Asylum of California, Stockton, Dec 1, 1875. Eds. Tribune: We have carefully examined the

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where he established the successful mercantile store T. W. Taylor and grew prosperous by trading with "the Enemy," at Camp Floyd, which was only 20 miles from his store and more convenient for the army than Salt Lake City. Perhaps to get him out of the way, Brigham Young called Taylor on a mission to England in 1862 and then to supervise the Church's emigration office in New York City from 1864-1866. No Church wagon teams were supplied to aid the immigrants during the 1865 season, so Taylor signed notes on behalf of the Church for around $20,000 to get European Saints to Utah that year, which Brigham Young refused to redeem when Taylor returned. Service to that debt and competitive business pressure from ZCMI led Taylor to sell his Lehi store in 1869 and move to the Salt Lake City 14th Ward, where he was soon made bishop. He build a large home on Second West, which he developed into a hotel. Bishop Taylor had grown up in a coal and iron producing area of England and took a great interest in developing the industry in Iron County, Utah. Around 1873 he began developing iron manufacturing for the Church, often using his own resources. Disagreements and struggles between Taylor and Brigham Young over control of the project continued when John Taylor became Church president after Brigham's death. The old $20,000 debt from the emigration project was settled after Brigham's death for $12,784, but then President Taylor reneged. Conflict over this debt and financial control over the coal and iron enterprises in Iron County were a large part of the reason why the project never succeeded. The conflict ended in 1886, when Thomas Taylor was released as bishop and excommunicated on the grounds of sodomy in Parowan, where the Church hoped in vain to avoid publicity. Thomas was replaced as 14th Ward Bishop by Joseph E. Taylor, President John Taylor's son, causing a tremendous scandal among the gentile community, as it happened during the apex of the polygamy arrests.

> books of this asylum, and are satisfied that Sam D. Sirrine has never been received here as a patient. Respectfully yours, W. T. Browne."

The editorial pointed out that Sirrine had been a soldier in a New York regiment and served in the Mexican War. Reasoning that he would have been placed upon the pension list of Mexican War veterans, the newspaper was awaiting an answer to a letter it had written to the Pension Bureau of the United States to settle the question of his whereabouts and demonstrate the fact whether he is dead or alive.[80]

After this the newspapers seemed to lose interest in the matter and fell silent for a time. The Gentiles assumed that he was dead and the supporters of Mormonism were ready to move on.

Emily, Samuel's first polygamous wife who had secured a divorce from him five years earlier, was six weeks pregnant with their sixth child when he disappeared. She delivered Mable the day after Christmas, 1875. Their son Leon was about three and Samuel F. was nine. Emily's sister Mary Ellen had four year old Ann May and two year old Orson at home.

The "Danites" were still thriving in Utah. After being totally vindicated in the Robinson case, on February 14, 1876 Chief Andrew Burt added the title of City Marshal to his old job as police chief, replacing his friend Bishop John Sharp, who retired while remaining colonel over the 3rd Regiment of Infantry of the Great Salt Lake County Militia. Burt moved his 3rd wife Mary Ann Lucas and her children into the second floor of the old jail on First South, where Mary Ann did all the cooking for the jail inmates.

The federal government was stepping up the pressure on the Mormons. On March 30, 1876 Sumner Howard[81] was appointed by President Grant to become U.S. Attorney for Utah Territory.

John D. Lee's trial in Beaver, Utah in July, 1875 for the 1857 Mountain Meadows massacre ended with a hung jury with the eight Mormon jurists voting for acquittal and the four non-Mormons for conviction. Congress had passed the Poland Act in 1874, which redefined the jurisdiction of the courts in Utah. It allowed court cases to be taken from the Mormon-controlled probate courts to be tried in federal courts. Sumner arrived in Utah in April, 1876 with instructions from Washington D.C. to get the matter brought to some sort of

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[80] This would not have settled the question. Although the Mexican War Pension Law was passed in 1874 it did not go into effect until 1887 due to political issues raised because of the many Civil War veterans who had also fought in Mexico. Confederate veterans were excluded.

[81] Sumner Howard was born in New York in 1835, but moved at the age of one with his family to Flint, Michigan. He became known as the state's best trial lawyer, and served several terms and the county prosecutor before serving as a delegate to Michigan's 1867 constitutional convention.

conclusion. He made it clear that his aim was to convict Lee, not Brigham Young, which ended Mormon resistance to the project and allied the Church with the prosecution. With the Church's cooperation previously resistant witnesses came forward, and in the second trial beginning on September 13, 1876 an all-Mormon jury convicted John D. Lee alone for the 1857 massacre.

That week a critical article appeared in the *Tribune* entitled "A Barren Victory," which criticized Howard's strategy, accusing him of putting the Mormon-dominated jury in the situation of either blaming Mormon authorities or sacrificing (John D.) Lee in the hope of "clearing the garments" of the Church leaders. The article went on to illustrate other ways in which the Mormon priesthood had "exercised the same dangerous influence," including a reiteration of part of Samuel's story:

> A year or so ago an anonymous letter was sent to this office giving the names of the parties who assassinated Dr. Robinson, and detailing how the foul deed was done. Supposing the writer to be a guilty participant, whose conscience troubled him, we offered a reward of $10,000 for the names of two witnesses willing to testify to the facts. Our correspondent, still preserving his incognita, replied that he held his life above the sum offered, and that further than he had already revealed he durst not go. We have always believed that Sam Sirrine was our secret correspondent, and his mysterious disappearance shortly after, only tended to confirm this suspicion. "Give thy thoughts no tongue" was Polonius' counsel to his son, but Deputy Sheriff Sirrine was burdened with a secret which gave him no rest; conscience compelled him to speak out in the vain hope of relief; thus he became dangerous to those connected with him in crime, and he was stealthily put out of the way.

But Samuel Sirrine had not been put out of the way. And he had not taken up a life under an assumed name, as previously charged. The name Samuel Duncan Sirrine was entered into the Bakersfield, California voter register on September 18, 1876. Samuel gave his occupation as assayer. He was living 280 miles south of San Francisco in the lower reaches of the Central Valley.

The town had been founded in 1869 by Thomas Baker, a lawyer and former colonel in the militia of Ohio, his home state, who was attracted to the area by the California gold rush. Bakersfield became an agricultural trade center for the mines of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and Owens Valley in the 1870s. The Southern Pacific Railroad reached the town of Sumner, east of Bakersfield, in 1874 and by 1876 it completed its route east to Caliente and through the Tehachapi Mountains. Its first oil was drilled there in 1877. By the time Samuel arrived, the courthouse had been completed and the population had reached over 700 including over 200 Chinese.

Samuel Sirrine was still on the mind of Sheriff Taylor. On September 29th in the Third District Court report of the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* this line appeared: "S. W. Taylor vs. S. D. Sirrine et al., motion for judgment on the pleadings." Evidently the sheriff was suing Samuel in absentia. The notice was also posted in *Deseret News* on October 4th. On October 11, 1876 Mary Ellen Sirrine married Berrill Covington. She considered herself a widow and her two children took on Covington's last name.

While his Mountain Meadows Massacre case was appealed, Lee used much of his prison time to write his autobiography.[82] It is an interesting read, especially the early years of his life, showing that he was a highly faithful and able Mormon. He gave a detailed description of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, openly describing his own role, but also taking care to describe the despicable actions of every one of the Mormons who had testified against him. On March 23, 1877 Lee was executed at Mountain Meadows by a firing squad. Recalling Joseph Smith's famous phrase, he told the gathered witnesses,

> I feel as calm as the summer morn and I have done nothing intentionally wrong. My conscience is clear before God and man....I do not fear death, I shall never go to a worse place that I am now in...I am a true believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I do not believe everything that is now being taught and practiced by Brigham Young....I believe he is leading the people astray, downward to destruction. But I believe in the gospel that was taught in its purity by Joseph Smith...I have been sacrificed in a cowardly, dastardly manner.

According to an article in the *New York Daily Herald*,[83] a new term for Howard's grand jury began in April, producing more than 75 indictments including "numerous indictments of Mormon priests." Sumner Howard was systematically investigating old Mormon incidents. His crusade took him to California.

The following article was published in the *Oakland Tribune* on July 16, 1877.

> The Honorable Sumner Howard, District Attorney visited San Francisco on Saturday for the purpose of procuring an important witness who will be brought before the Grand Jury of Utah, now in session and investigating the Mormon affairs of that Territory. The witness was a member of the famous Danite band, and it had generally been assumed that he was murdered many years ago.
> Howard...ascertained that he has been living in this state for some 25 years....name of the witness and the nature of his testimony is withheld. Howard leaves with the

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[82] John Doyle Lee and Alfred Henry Lewis, *The Mormon Menace, the Confessions of John Doyle Lee, Danite,* Project Gutenberg. John Doyle Lee, the Mormon Menace.

[83] August 9, 1877.

> witness for Utah this morning....The object of the present Grand Jury is to thoroughly investigate the evils of the Mormon system, and to bring to light the guilty in all criminal offenses.

The Utah press was ready and waiting for Howard's return. The next day, the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* reported under the headline "**That Danite.**"

> District Attorney Howard returned from California yesterday accompanied by Samuel D. Sirrine, who is presumably that old time "Danite" of which the S.F. dispatches informed us on Monday.... (He was back to testify in the murder of Dr. Robinson), of which brutal deed and its perpetrators it has been asserted he has information. If Sirrine has knowledge of those murderers he is the witness that the people of Utah have long wanted to get upon the stand...hoping to bring the guilty to justice.

A report datelined Salt Lake City, July 19th appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner* asserting that

> ...the Mormons had already sworn out a warrant for (Samuel's) arrest, the object being to get possession of and bulldoze or blood-atone him. The United States Marshal, however, holds the Serrine (sic) warrant. He was before the Grand Jury today, and revealed all he knew. The result was that an indictment was found against Jeter Clinton, who was Police Magistrate here in 1866, and who, it is alleged, directed the murder of Robinson under the order of Daniel H. Wells.

The *Deseret News* chimed in with irony,

> **Come to Life**. Samuel D. Sirrine, the same who, according to the repeated statements of the organ of the rabid ringsters, was "blood-atoned," long since, has come to life again. He arrived in the city this morning from California.

The story was covered in newspapers across the country. On July 27, 1877 the *Lawrence Standard* (Lawrence, Kansas) wrote: "District Attorney Howard, of Utah, has produced from California an old apostate Mormon, S. D. Sirrine, said to have knowledge of several Mormon murderers. He will go before the grand jury now in session."

July 31, 1877 was the dateline of an article from Salt Lake City in the *New York Daily Herald* published August 9th. Rather than the Robinson trial, which had widely been thought the subject of the grand jury, this article concentrated on the Morrisite massacre of 1862. The paper's long account gave a detailed, though sensationalized, description of the incident, followed by the only existing description (whether accurate or not) of the actual content of Samuel's testimony to the grand jury:

> Soon after his return from the East Mr. Howard succeeded in "spotting" a most important witness, S. D. Sirrine, who was engaged in the Morrisite massacre, and who, for prudential reasons, had taken himself out of Utah and lain *perdu* for years in a remote part of California.[84] Mr. Howard himself went to California, interviewed Sirrine, and brought him to Salt Lake City, where he is now secluded from Mormon vengeance.
>
> (Samuel Sirrine's) disclosures, together with those of other witnesses, have since led to the arrest of (Robert T.) Burton, who has become counsellor to the presiding bishop of the whole Mormon Church and of Dr. Jeter Clinton, who accompanied Burton's forces as a surgeon, and was guilty of the most cruel murder perpetrated in the camp of the Morrisites. Both these Mormon scoundrels are under indictment, and Clinton is in the Penitentiary....The jury will continue its sessions to the end of this week (July 31) when it will adjourn over until September and sit two or three weeks that month....Sufficient testimony is already in to hang a number of the chief saints in Zion.

The article went on to claim that Samuel Sirrine testified that he had heard Dr. Tait, whose surgical instruments had been borrowed by Jeter, the surgeon accused of murder, exclaim: "Well, I'll be damned if Clinton ain't a poor surgeon; look at the way he's mauled this knife." If this is accurate, it is additional evidence that Samuel was brought to testify as a witness on this matter, and not necessarily on the Robinson case, as the Salt Lake papers had assumed. The writer of the article went on to say that more indictments were expected in September, and it called on President Rutherford B. Hayes to send a competent, wide-awake Governor to the Utah Territory.

By August 2nd, Samuel had given his testimony and was gone. From the *Herald-Republican*:

> **Departed**. On Wednesday afternoon (July 29th) S. D. Sirrine, the witness, went to Ogden, accompanied by a deputy United States Marshal. The officer remained in the Junction City, (Ogden) but it is thought that Sirrine returned to California."

The paper had not been able to resist this jab at the *Tribune*:

> The return of Sirrine, by the way, gives the lie direct to the border ruffians who have been loud in charging that he was murdered by the Mormons. However, as the red headed editor has to swallow a score or two of lies every week, this one will probably have no effect upon him.[85]

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[84] *Perdu* is French for "lost." Bakersfield probably qualified as "remote."

[85] *Salt Lake Herald-Republican,* July 18, 1877.

The *Deseret News* wrote: "Yesterday afternoon S. Sirrine was accompanied to the depot by a deputy U.S. marshal and placed on board the cars. It is supposed he has gone west again." It appears that multiple old cases were under scrutiny at once. In the adjacent column the paper reported that S. M. Butcher had been arrested on an indictment for murder for the killing of the Gabe and Gilbert Cotton brothers in 1873.[86] Also the *News* announced that on motion of counsel for the defense, the examination of General Robert T. Burton on his connection to the "Morrisite" affair was to be continued until four weeks later.[87] The following account may refer to a disturbance accompanying this part of the inquiry:

> In another incident in 1877, Sumner Howard had brought Robert T. Burton before a U.S. commissioner, charging him with having committed murder in the Morrisite schism of 1862. Again the Danites, or men believed by Howard to be Danites, rushed in, and the commander of the Nauvoo Legion also came in and argued furiously. Howard and the commissioner were sufficiently intimidated to release Burton on bond. Howard reported, "It is very significant that Gen. Wells, their military leader, should be the first man to show a disposition to 'bulldoze' the courts." Howard promised to endeavor to "keep cool," but he sought and received assurances that the army was ready to sustain him.[88]

On August 3, 1877 indictments were filed. I have tried every available avenue to find Samuel's actual testimony and the actual findings of the grand jury, and have become convinced by the various state, regional, and national libraries that the records no longer exist.

The echoes of the investigation continued to reverberate in the national press. The article in the *New York Daily Herald* was re-published on August 23, 1877 by the Columbus, Indiana *Republican*, on August 13th by the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, and by the *Edinburg Daily Courier*, in Edinburg, Indiana on August 25th.

The *St. Joseph Gazette* wrote:

> The story of the Morrisite butchery was obtained from an actor in the affair, one Sirrine, whom the Federal District Attorney persuaded to turn state's evidence. Dr.

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[86] See pages 66 and 102.

[87] *Deseret News* August 8, 1877. The paper was a weekly at that time and was reporting on events of August 2nd.

[88] Stephen Cresswell, *The U.S. Department of Justice in Utah Territory, 1870-1890*, Utah Historical Quarterly Vo. 53, 1985, No. 3

> Jeter Clinton the surgeon who killed a wounded prisoner is now under lock and key: Burton, the head butcher is out on bail.

The story was the same in the *Winchester Argus* and the *Osage City Free Press* (Kansas).

Brigham Young

Then, on August 29, 1877 Brigham Young died unexpectedly, probably from a ruptured appendix.

Sumner Howard was done. With the death of Brigham Young he evidently felt that he had done what he could and submitted his resignation near the end of September, effective January 1, 1878.

On September 29th Orrin Porter Rockwell was arrested for the Aiken murders of 1858 and released on bail a week later. His trial was set for the October term of the district court the following year. But on June 9, 1878 Rockwell collapsed and died unexpectedly in a public stable in Salt Lake City. The most feared and notorious of the Danites was gone.

One week after his death the *San Francisco Chronicle* published a two column article on Orrin Porter

Orrin Porter Rockwell portrait by Alvin L. Gittins (1922-1981)

Rockwell[89] titled: **The Danites. A Sketch of the Noted Chief, Orrin Porter Rockwell**. It began with a rather respectful and accurate portrayal of Orrin's life up to his move to Independence, Missouri. A fairly accurate account of the origin of the Danites followed including the evolution of their name from Daughters of Zion to Destroying Angels, and then to Big Fan, referring to the purging of the threshing floor, and an explanation for Port's fondness for the word "wheat." It then gave a verbatim account of the lengthy oath required of the Danite and an elaborate description of a Mormon temple-like initiation ceremony for fellowship with a second oath. The article accurately described Hawn's Mill and the expulsion, and the killing of David Patten, with objectivity and considerable sympathy for the Mormons. It continued with the story of the attempted assassination of Governor Boggs and Joseph Smith's advice to Rockwell never to cut his hair. The author blamed Rockwell for the Babbitt killing and the slaying of the Aiken Brothers, regretting that Rockwell died before the impending trial. Rockwell was said to have become a public nuisance in his later days, drinking and disturbing the peace, described nonetheless as honest, truthful, and generally admired. The writer claimed to have gotten information from

> ...one who admits that he was familiar with Rockwell, knew much of his private thoughts within the last few years, and who, we have reason for thinking, was himself a Danite....We are told that the successorship to Rockwell was disposed of some years ago, and that it rests on the shoulders of a distinguished member of the police force of Salt Lake."

This was most likely Andrew Burt.

On July 27, 1878 just eight weeks after Rockwell's death the *Sacramento Bee* ran an advertisement:

> *The Destroying Angels of Mormondom: or, a Sketch of the Life of Orrin Porter Rockwell, the late Danite Chief,* by Achilles (Thos. Gardner), San Francisco, is at hand. It is in pamphlet form, illustrated, and purports to give the "true inwardness" of Mormonism. Selling at W.A. and C.S. Houghton, Sacramento.

The following comment was offered by the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* 12 days later:

> Some days ago we announced the appearance in San Francisco, of a book entitled "*The Life and Confessions of O.P. Rockwell*," etc., and suggested that ex-District Attorney Howard might have had something to do with it. We have since learned

[89] Rockwell portrait at https://collections.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6cr5t27

> that the author of the work, who signs himself "Achilles" is Samuel D. Sirrine, a person whose name has figured in rather disgraceful collection in this territory during late years. The book seems to be regarded in its true light, that is, as a fraud, hence it finds little sale. It has been taken off the railroad trains, where it did not pay the news boys for handling it.

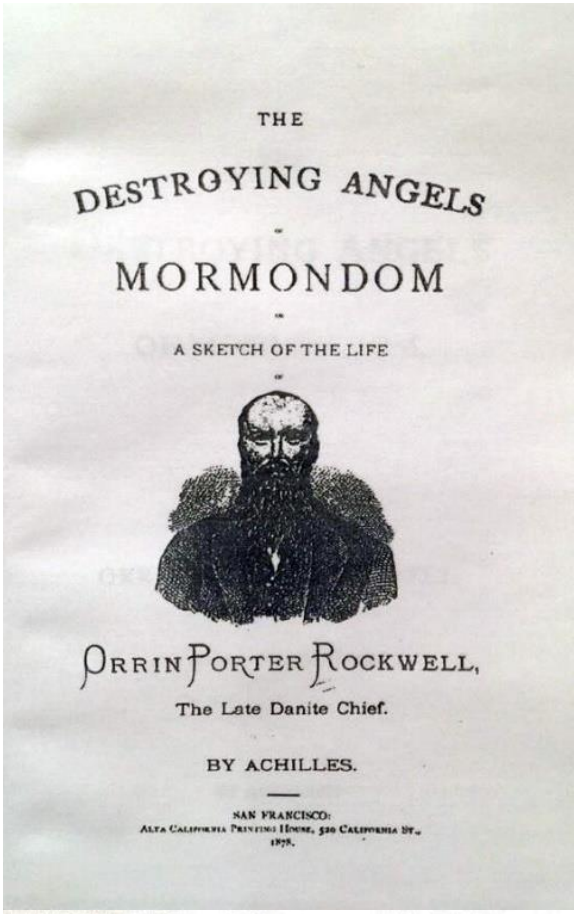
Despite the newspaper's negative review of the book by Achilles, it has appeared frequently in the historical writing about this wild period of Mormon and western history. To almost all authors, the identity of Achilles seems to have remained a mystery until Harold Schindler, the most prominent biographer of Orrin Porter Rockwell, discovered the *Herald-Republican's* foregoing attribution and mentioned it in a note found in the introduction of his second edition in 1971.[90]

Part of my reason to write this book is to check out that assertion. To that end I have written the next chapter.

[90] Harold Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, University of Utah Press, 1971, p. 11.

CHAPTER THREE– ACHILLES

Achilles didn't exactly write a book—a better word for it would be a pamphlet. So far, I have not been able to get my hands on an original. The three that I have been able to locate are in the special collections of the University of Utah's Marriott Library, University of California Berkley Library, and Princeton University Library. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, all three organizations give limited access only to their own students and faculty. The University of Utah also has a bound facsimile of the booklet on the shelf in the general library, which was produced by a photocopy machine at the Bancroft Library in California. The Marriott Library graciously issued me a library card based on my lapsed adjunct faculty status in the College of Medicine, which allowed me to check the copy out for three months and write this chapter. The image on the right shows the cover of the original, which was not hardbound. The pamphlet is about 8" x 5" in size and has 46 pages. Between the title page and the preface is an interesting engraving of the famous Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. The building had been completed just in time for October Conference 1875, less than three years before *The Destroying Angels of Mormondom* was published. Beneath that image is the name E. F. Bean, who registered the book with the Library of Congress. In the book catalogue of the Marriott Library, E. F. Bean is listed as the author although the title and preface give the name of the author as Achilles, obviously a pseudonym.


THE

DESTROYING ANGELS

MORMONDOM

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE

ORRIN PORTER ROCKWELL,

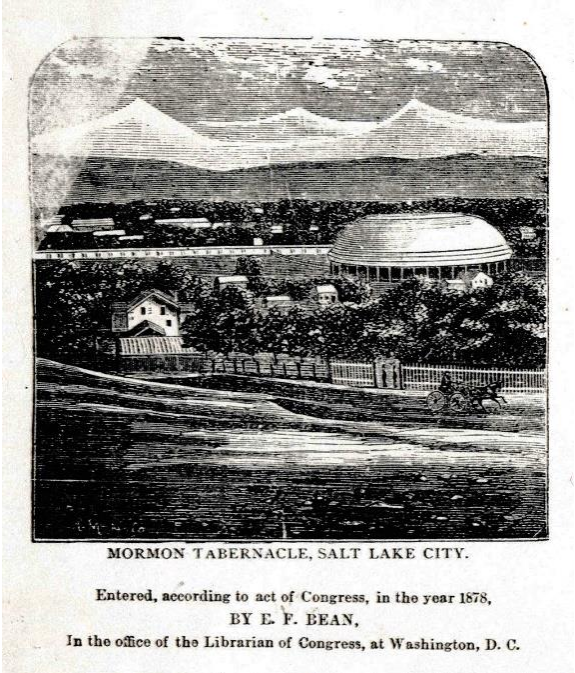
The Late Danite Chief.

BY ACHILLES.

SAN FRANCISCO:

ALTA CALIFORNIA PRINTING HOUSE, 530 CALIFORNIA ST.

1878.


MORMON TABERNACLE, SALT LAKE CITY.

Entered, according to act of Congress, in the year 1878,
BY E. F. BEAN,
In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

The *Destroying Angels of Mormondom* contains a preface and eight brief chapters, which vary

considerably in the amount of detail. The preface declares the purpose of the book to reveal "the absolute subjugation of the members to the autocratic dictates of the heads of the (Mormon) Church," an aim which is felt by the author to be missing in previous works on the subject. He proposes to accomplish this through a "confession" of the late Orrin Porter Rockwell as "given to one of his friends, who can vouch for every word...." At the end of the book a stronger statement follows, that "before his death Porter Rockwell admitted every word as to himself written herein to be true." This suggests a knowledgeable source for the stories in the book other than the writer Achilles himself, who ran them by Rockwell before the book was published, likely even before the book was written.

In keeping with Achilles' stated objective, most of the first chapter and the last chapter don't mention Porter Rockwell at all, sandwiching his exploits between two chapters of an almost hysterical anti-Mormon tirade. Mormonism is described in extreme terms such as "...wicked...as was ever exhibited in the history of the dark ages as the persecution of the Huguenots or the massacre of St. Bartholomew." In the summarizing last chapter, the author finds it "...astonishing that in this day of enlightenment so large a body of misguided people can be so infatuated as to believe in sincerity in the doctrine of an organization founded on a bloody autocracy, and whose very essence is blasphemous, fraudulent, and wicked in the fullest extent." Achilles seems to be relying on sensationalism or defending a grudge. In contrast, the biographical obituary of Orrin Porter Rockwell offered by the *San Francisco Chronicle* a month earlier feels well-researched and objective. One passage common to both offerings is a lengthy oath required of Danite initiates, which Achilles renders word-for-word in his book with only one substitution: changing the penalty for divulging the oath from "having melted lead poured into my ear" to "having my blood shed," possibly to pave the way for his later discussion of the doctrine of blood atonement. Interestingly, the *Chronicle* writer also claimed to have had an informant, who "admits that he was familiar with Rockwell, knew much of his private thoughts within the last few years, and who, we have reason for thinking, was himself a Danite."

Near the end of the beginning chapter, Achilles introduces Orrin Porter Rockwell with surprising inaccuracy, placing the organization of the Danites in Kirtland, Ohio at around 1835 as an "avenging body," whose membership included only five members: Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, "Simon" Patton, Oliver Cowdery, and Rockwell. Achilles writes that their only act of violence in Kirtland was to assassinate a man named Jamison in response to the tar-and-feathering of Joseph Smith in 1838 or 1839.[91] He then describes the re-

[91] It is hard to know where to begin to correct these misstatements. Here are a few facts: The tar-and-feather incident was on March 14, 1832. I have been unable to find any historical references to Jamison or to an assassination. More likely names suggested by historians for the leader of the mob are Symonds Ryder (Bushman), Eli Johnson (Brodie), or Ezra Booth (LDS website). Rockwell had already moved to Big Blue, Kansas near Independence, Missouri by the fall of 1831.

organization of the Danites in Salt Lake City under the leadership of Rockwell in 1854, omitting the entire history of Danites in Missouri.

Rockwell's successor in Salt Lake City is said to have been Andrew Burt, Salt Lake City police chief of 18 years, now serving as City Marshal and Bishop of the 21st Ward.[92] Whether either Rockwell or Burt actually served as Danite Chief in Salt Lake City is controversial. This is a common claim of many anti-Mormon writers, but the official position of the L.D.S. Church is that Danites never existed in Utah.[93] [94] However, according to Sarah Pratt, widow of Orson Pratt, while she was visiting her friend Vilate Kimball shortly before her husband Heber C. Kimball's death on June 22, 1868, the apostle confided to her "we have just reorganized the Danite Band in the Endowment House. Fifty brethren have joined and been sworn in." This was in anticipation of an influx of troublemakers with the new railroad.[95]

Achilles' history of Porter Rockwell's career begins in Chapter II with the story of the attempted assassination of Governor "Tilburn" Boggs in 1841.[96] The Boggs story would have required Achilles to have no special informant, as it had been repeated many times in newspapers and books of the time.

However, the next story is told in great detail, and apparent accuracy, much different from most of the stories which occurred prior to Samuel Sirrine's arrival in Utah around 1859, and it contains some details which are not present in other accounts. It is the story of Orrin Porter Rockwell's trip to the California gold fields in 1849. Rockwell had been named Deputy Marshal of the Territory of Deseret in its first public election on March 12th after

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[92] The biographical data on Andrew Burt is basically accurate. He had served 16 years as police chief, two years as city marshal, and was just finishing his first years as bishop.

[93] From the L.D.S. Church website: The Danites organization existed for only five months, from June through October 1838, and were only active in two counties in northwestern Missouri. Though the existence of the Danites was short-lived, it resulted in a longstanding and much-embellished myth about a secret society of Mormon vigilantes.

[94] In speaking of the Mormon Minutemen, Latter-day Saint historian Leonard Arrington wrote: "Taking some license from the short-lived nonofficial Mormon vigilante group in Missouri, they were sometimes referred to as Danites or Destroying Angels. They played, and continued to play, a major role in western fiction, and many readers have imagined Brigham as a military dictator with a personal army of avengers who carried out his orders to capture, torture, and kill people who crossed him. But that Minute Men were anything more than a group willing to undertake arduous labors for their governor and church president has never been demonstrated." Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young*, Doubleday, 2012, p. 250.

[95] Dr. W. Wyl, *Mormon Portraits*, Tribune Printing and Publishing Company, Salt Lake City, 1886.

[96] Achilles made many verifiable errors in this book such as getting Rockwell's birthdate and birthplace wrong. Of course, the governor's name was Lilburn Boggs, and the attempt on his life was on May 2, 1842. I will not attempt to correct every one of these mistakes unless it seems to be a clue to the Achilles' identity.

which he accompanied the Mormon apostle Amasa Lyman to California to collect tithing from the Mormon gold miners and ended up staying for eight months.

Chapter III begins with the murder of Almon Babbitt, Secretary of the Utah Territory, who was killed near Ft. Kearney in Wyoming while traveling to Utah with $20,000. Rockwell was involved, but was never clearly proven to be the assassin. This story has been told and retold with many variations, and was certainly not original with Achilles. This is followed by an error-filled account of the attack on John Tobin at Santa Clara, Utah in February, 1857. Writers of the time, including Achilles, assumed that Tobin was targeted to be killed for apostasy, but there is much more to the story. Four men were attacked in the Santa Clara River area as they were leaving Utah including a military surveyor and John Tobin, son-in-law to Charles C. Rich, who was suspected of being an apostate. Tobin had corresponded with Brigham Young's 15 year old daughter Alice from Oregon Territory in 1854, and many expected him to marry her when he was discharged from the army in May 1856, but instead he began courting Sarah Jane Rich, oldest child of Charles C. Rich and married her December 29, 1856.[97] She had a baby September 14, 1857, nine months after the shooting. It is true that Tobin had a somewhat troubled relationship with Brigham Young, but he seemed to be in good standing with the Rich family, and actually returned to Utah the following year to live for a time with his young wife, showing no fear of Mormon justice at that point, and was actually sent on a mission to England. One modern writer has suggested that the attack on Tobin was more likely a case of mistaken identity, and should have been directed toward two criminals, Ambrose and Betts, who had joined Tobin's party by chance. All of this was caused by a misunderstanding of a letter from Brigham Young by the local bishops, Haight and Dame.[98] Tobin later apostatized and actively opposed the church.

There are two possible connections in this case to Samuel. First, Tobin fled after the attack to San Bernardino. Samuel could have been in San Bernardino at that time although he was not baptized until November 1, 1857. If so, Samuel could have known the story and it is even possible that they interacted. Second, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Tobin later identified one of his attackers as Stephen Taylor, who later became Salt Lake County Sheriff and might have been the very person Samuel was fleeing in 1875. Although Achilles accused Rockwell of committing the attack, it is unlikely despite local rumors at the time for within a few days of the murder Rockwell was a hundred miles east of Laramie setting up a government mail route. Interestingly, in John D. Lee's confession, *Mormonism Unveiled*, Lee named two totally different men, Joel White and John Willis, as Tobin's attackers.

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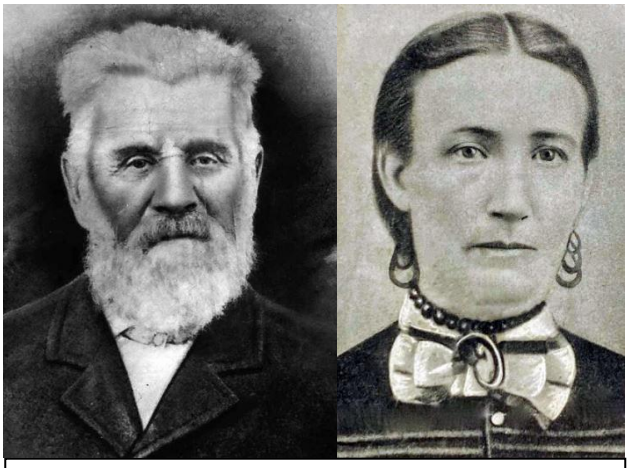
[97] Alice Young had married Hiram Clawson that October as a third wife.

[98] Parshall, Ardis E., Pursue, *Retake and Punish*: The 1857 Santa Clara Ambush.

Achilles also accused Rockwell of the murder of Henry Jones and his mother Hannah Gailey Jones in Payson for incest. This is also a long story, which Achilles got only partly right, if at all. The Jones family had fled Salt Lake City in the spring of 1858 when Brigham Young ordered the evacuation of Salt Lake Valley to resist the approaching federal troops. Hannah Jones and her family took shelter in Payson, where a dugout was put up for them, but after hearing a rumor of incest between Hannah and her oldest son Henry, a mob of local Payson men killed both of them.[99] The short version is that after Henry Jones had been killed, a witness in Payson observed that he had been castrated. While it is clear that the murder was a local job, the castration likely occurred in Salt Lake City before the family fled, so it is possible, although far from certain, that Rockwell was among the vigilantes who performed that act. There is a remote possibility that Samuel heard gossip regarding the murders, since the story was only a month or two old when he and George Sirrine's family passed through Payson on the exodus from San Bernardino.



Milo Andrus and Lucy Loomis Andrus

Chapter IV begins with a discussion of the doctrine of blood atonement followed by the story of Milo "Andrews" and his unfaithful wife, which was to have happened in 1857. Achilles would not be the first to misspell the name of Milo Andrus, but the error marks the author as an outsider, since Milo Andrus was a prominent Mormon, who was well known in Salt Lake City. As the story goes, Milo could not bear to perform blood atonement on his own wife, even if she were an adulteress, so he enlisted Porter Rockwell, who willingly cut her throat. This story was refuted by none other than Lucy Loomis Tuttle Andrus, the unfaithful wife. Her true story is interesting in its own right. Intending to immigrate to Utah from New York City on the ship *Brooklyn,* Lucy stowed her belongings in the ship's hold, and then never saw them again when she changed her mind and crossed plains with her first husband, Hubbard Tuttle, who later died on a gold mission. She became the third of Milo Andrus' eleven wives in 1851 and they had five children together. She lived in a halfway house at the Point of the Mountain between 1859 and 1861, not far from Porter Rockwell's Lehi house. It is possible that the part of the story about her infidelity is true, for she divorced Andrus and moved to Spanish Fork. But she didn't receive blood atonement at the hands of Rockwell (or anyone else). Long after deriding in

[99] For the full story, see my book, *Letters of Books and Slates*, pages 286-287. The book is unpublished, but can be read on-line.

her memoir that "ridiculous rumor over my death" Lucy was killed in Spanish Fork in 1890 when her buggy overturned.

Next Achilles documents Rockwell's well-known role in harassing Johnsons (sic) Army in 1857 and in the infamous murder of the Aiken brothers, which is generally attributed to Rockwell,[100] although the exact role of Brigham Young and the several southern Utah bishops who were involved is controversial. In Chapter V, two additional well-known incidents involving Rockwell during the year 1858 are reported by Achilles with minimal details, both of which had appeared at the time in the newspapers. One is the apprehension of Joaquin Johnson, who had stolen government mules, and the other is the shooting of a man named Davidson after an altercation in Rockwell's bar in Lehi. The act was determined in court to be in self-defense.

All of the preceding events occurred before Samuel's appearance in Salt Lake City in July, 1859. With the exception of Rockwell in the 1849 gold fields, the stories were all generally known, and are repeated by Achilles with little detail and considerable inaccuracy. The stories that follow all happened while Samuel Sirrine was living in Salt Lake City. And in general, many of them contain details that suggest the author consulted with a person possessing firsthand knowledge.

The first of these stories relates the death of a Mormon named John Gean (actually spelled Gheen), who years earlier had impulsively shot and killed a neighbor who had trespassed on his property in Council Bluffs. During the Mormon Reformation of 1856, it was determined that his repentance would require blood atonement. On September 28, 1859 Gheen was found dead on the corner of First East and "Second Street" (evidently Second South), shot in the forehead leaving an empty chamber in his gun, and considered widely to have committed suicide. Achilles states that there were no powder burns and claims the act was an involuntary blood atonement at the hands of Porter Rockwell, who was a deputy sheriff in Salt Lake County at the time. The phonetic mis-spelling of Gheen[101] suggests that Achilles wrote from an oral report rather than from direct knowledge. And it seems unlikely that a writer who was a native of Salt Lake City would call Second South "Second Street."

The next "deed of wickedness" exposed by Achilles is the killing of the "McCray" brothers on August 31, 1861. Kenneth and Alexander McRae were the 21 and 19 year old sons of

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[100] It was for the Aiken murder that Rockwell was belatedly arrested on September 29, 1877 just before Sumner Howard resigned his post as Territorial Attorney for Utah. Porter was out on bail for this charge when he died in 1878.

[101] There are multiple cases in the document of phonetic misspellings of local names which support this point, for example Lehigh for the town of Lehi, McCray for McRae, Johnson for Johnston, Andrews for Andrus, and Severe for Sevier.

Alexander McRae, a prominent, if not famous, Mormon. Alexander Sr. was one of the five men who had been kept captive for over four months in Liberty Jail with Joseph Smith in the winter of 1838-1839. He was later a captain in the original Nauvoo legion. After moving with the pioneers to Utah he was elected Territorial Marshal in 1856 by a joint session of the legislature and was named bishop of the 11th Ward in Salt Lake City on January 19, 1857. Alexander McRae was a deputy marshal at the time the saints repossessed the valley after the arrival of Johnston's Army, and he had been serving since 1859 as warden of the territorial penitentiary when the event happened. Achilles describes this incident in great detail.

The two boys[102] had stolen a mule, and Porter Rockwell and another "well known" deputy sheriff arrested the boys in Emigration Canyon about 12 miles from Salt Lake City on a warrant. During the arrest the officers killed both boys with shotguns and delivered the bodies to their parents' front yard. The officers claimed the boys had resisted arrest, a common claim in police killings to this very day. But Achilles writes that the boys had been executed after being disarmed. He continues:

> The horror-stricken mother came out, and in her anguish denounced Rockwell as a murderer and a villain. He retorted upon her by saying, that if she had done her duty, her sons would have been good Saints, and that if she had her deserts and he did his duty, she would be in the same place that her children were.

There is no way to determine which version is correct, of course. The story did not even make the newspapers, which was surprising to me given the prominence of the family. However, it is certain that the event occurred, as it is mentioned briefly in the histories of the McRae family. The exact wording of the discussion suggests that Achilles' informant could have been present or heard it from Rockwell himself. Although the deputy who accompanied Rockwell was not named, it could not have been Samuel Sirrine, who was not a deputy sheriff until 13 years later.

Achilles also reports another police shooting involving Rockwell with an interesting twist. It had occurred a few months earlier in the same year. A new federal governor, John W. Dawson of Indiana, had arrived for duty in December, 1860, but within three weeks he was fleeing for his life after making unwelcome advances to a Mormon widow. He was attacked and severely beaten at Ephraim Hanks' mail station at the top of Emigration Canyon while waiting for an eastbound coach. The perpetrators were a drunken bunch of young Mormon troublemakers intent on avenging the woman, among them several of Dawson's own bodyguards. Charges were filed against the attackers, who were later caught by a posse as

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[102] Despite their pious parents, the McRae boys already had a reputation for rowdiness. On September 19, 1860 the Deseret news reported that Kenneth McRae had been indicted for riot, but found not guilty.

they fled into the west desert on their way to California, and several were killed "while trying to escape." This event did not escape the attention of the newspapers and was widely known.[103]

Next is told the story of Tom Coleman, the black bellman at the Salt Lake House, who was murdered on December 12, 1866.[104] Achilles attributes the motive to Brigham Young's doctrine against the mixing of races, which would require the shedding of blood to atone, and the deed itself to Porter Rockwell on Brigham Young's orders. Interestingly, Achilles' rendition of the story contains more details than the rather sparse newspaper reports of the time, which suggests that he received them from an independent source or manufactured them. One of these is the assertion that Coleman had been lured to his death by the clerk of the hotel. Samuel Sirrine was working at the Salt Lake House during that time, probably as the manager, but possibly as the clerk. If Samuel was Achilles, why would he implicate himself in the crime?

Chapter VI consists of two pages describing Rockwell's marriages and personal characteristics.

Chapter VII is also brief. Strangely, most of it deals with Rockwell's relationship to General Patrick Edward Connor, the commander of the California Volunteers manning Camp Douglas. Although Rockwell readily helped the (then) Colonel with scouting and in conducting the Indian massacre in January, 1863 at Bear River, Achilles claims that Rockwell was actually a spy planted by Brigham Young to keep track of Connor. Achilles feels that Connor was well aware of this and actually played Rockwell along to his own advantage, and praised Connor as an excellent soldier and "one of the best friends that citizens of Utah ever had, whether Mormon or Gentile: and we believe that could the people of the Territory be allowed a secret ballot today, Connor would be elected Governor of the Territory." This unlikely claim and somewhat arbitrary chapter praising General Connor makes more sense in the light of Samuel's work with the general in organizing the Mexican War Veterans' Society in November, 1874, which I related in Chapter Two.

The last paragraph of Chapter VII relates Porter Rockwell's death.

Chapter VIII begins with the assertion that Porter Rockwell had admitted every word written in the book about him to be true.[105] What follows is a five page summary of the

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[103] The event is described in great detail by Harold Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, University of Utah Press, 1966, pp. 312-315.

[104] See pages 57-58 in Chapter Two for details.

[105] It is hard to imagine that Rockwell made that admission, since several of Achilles' accusations are demonstrably false.

evils of Mormonism, ending with a deserved shot at Utah's congressman[106] as being in the palm of Brigham Young.

Now let's address the question: Who was Achilles?

On the basis of the August 8, 1878 article from the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, to which I referred in the preceding chapter, I initially believed the charge that Samuel D. Sirrine wrote anonymously as Achilles. In fact, I hoped it to be true, which would validate my whole project. Now having researched the life of Samuel, I find it very unlikely.

The handful of other writers who attribute the book to Samuel Sirrine seem to rely on that same article. However, the warring Salt Lake City newspapers of that period often showed a tenuous relationship to the truth, and the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* had a motive to discredit Samuel Sirrine, which linking him to the book would certainly accomplish for its audience. But that is just one reason, and not the strongest one.

Probably the most important clue is that Achilles claimed to have a source who knew Porter Rockwell personally. Since Samuel knew Rockwell, he is more likely a source than the author.

The hot anti-Mormon tone of the book does not seem to fit what I have learned of Samuel Sirrine. Before he joined the Church his impressions of Mormonism probably came chiefly from his older brothers Mephibosheth and George, who joined the Church, and from John, who never joined, but managed to peacefully co-exist with Mormonism. Samuel's ardor probably gradually faded after his baptism, but he went through the motions of living in polygamy, forming a successful business partnership with his Mormon in-laws, fitting into the Mormon Theater company, and even going on a mission. The fact that he served on juries at least four times suggests that he may have occupied a position of trust with Mormons and Gentiles alike. While living in Salt Lake City he participated in the militia and later joined the police force. He does seem to have dropped out gradually, but I see little evidence of a bitter rift with Mormonism as a religion.

The many errors and inaccuracies in the book suggest an unfamiliarity with the culture and geography of Utah. Foremost among these for me are the many spelling errors in place names and names of people, which would be very familiar to a native and for which logical homonyms might be substituted by a hearer. The same could be said for several obvious mistakes in church history, which it is hard to imagine a Mormon would make.

Among the stories, some passages stand out as detailed and accurate. These are mostly events that occur after 1859, when Samuel was actually living in Utah, which suggests that

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[106] George Q. Cannon.

Samuel could have been a useful source for those sections. The exception to this is the detailed section on Porter Rockwell's eight-month stay in the goldfields in 1849, which occurred while Samuel was still living in New York. However, Samuel could have passed on stories he heard from his brothers John and George, who were living in California during that year, or from his friends Orrin Smith, and especially Henry Brizzee, the son-in-law of Rockwell, who was also there, or from Rockwell himself, who served with Samuel as a deputy sheriff.

Finally there is the matter of omissions from Achilles' book of events, which I cannot imagine Samuel leaving out had he been the author, because he was directly and heavily involved in them. I will list them here, but not discuss them in detail, since I have already done so in the preceding chapter.

The most astonishing omission is the killing of Dr. Robinson in 1866, which remains one of the most dramatic examples of the division between the Mormon and gentile establishments in Utah and of the allegations of conspiracy between the Church and corrupt law enforcement. Samuel was one of six members of the coroner's jury who investigated the shooting and heard the arguments of both sides, including Hosea Stout's surprising admission that secret "combinations" of conspirators existed in the city. The possibly related murder of the negro Tom Coleman a month after the Robinson affair was addressed by Achilles, but in a way that could have actually cast suspicion upon Samuel as complicit, and not in a way that reflected Samuel's perspective on a crime with which he was very familiar.

No less surprising is the failure of Achilles to mention the Morrisite Massacre which took place in 1862, to which Samuel Sirrine was an eyewitness. Of course, Samuel did not sit on the jury for this case, but he gave testimony to a grand jury, and it was for this reason that he was brought back to Utah by the territorial attorney, Sumner Howard.

Another omission was the 1873 killing of the Cotton brothers in Bingham Canyon by Saul Butcher, son-in-law to Bill Hickman, one of the most notorious of all the Danites. Samuel sat on the jury for this case, and would have known every detail of the event.

Finally, if Samuel had written the book, why did he remain silent about the events in which he was involved as a deputy sheriff between the summer of 1874 and his flight from Utah the following May? The circumstance of his flight and the reaction of Sheriff Stephen Taylor suggest that Samuel was a threat to reveal corruption which he had uncovered in his police work. And if Samuel knew of Stephen Taylor's alleged part in the Tobin attack of 1857, why was that not mentioned by Achilles?

A possible rebuttal to my argument about the missing stories might be that Achilles' book was specifically about Orrin Porter Rockwell, and had no room for other Danite stories. But

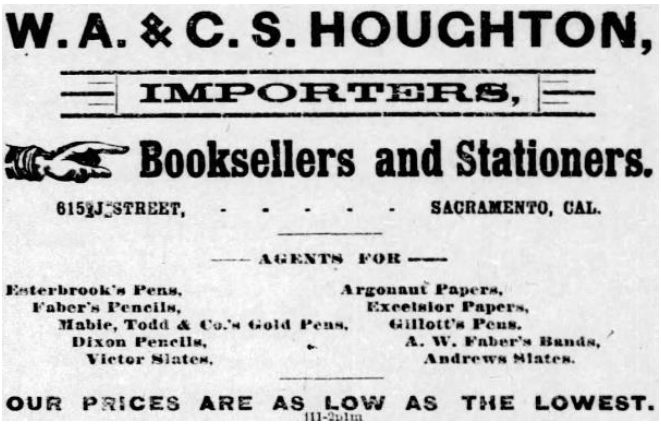
about a third of the book was not about Rockwell at all, but the corruption of the Mormon hierarchy. These could have supported that claim. The timing of the book's publication so soon after Rockwell's death suggests an attempt to exploit the contemporary public interest heightened by the article in the *San Francisco Chronicle.* But that could be said of anyone writing under the pseudonym Achilles. And Achilles seemed willing to tie plenty of his own Danite tales to Rockwell with little corroborating evidence. Why not a few more?

Here's one more reason to doubt that Samuel was Achilles. Samuel had already been outed by Sumner Howard, so he no longer had any reason to use an alias. I believe that the alias was used by someone who still had a reputation to protect, or perhaps to hide the fact that the writer of the book was a stranger to Mormonism with little credibility.

I have concluded that Samuel was a likely source for some, but not all of Achilles' material. If so, who, then, *was* Achilles?

Edwin F. Bean had at least a minor role in producing *The Destroying Angels of Mormondom*—his name was on the title page. If the anonymous author was not Samuel Sirrine, why not Bean?

The announcement of the publication of the book and the only print advertisement that I have been able to find contained two additional names: Thos. Gardner and the booksellers W.A. and C.S. Houghton, Sacramento. There were two men named Thomas Gardner working in the printing business in Sacramento. Interestingly, both of them were working for the *Sacramento Record* in 1873—Thomas B. Gardner was associate editor of the newspaper and Thomas J. Gardner identified himself in the city directory that year as "pressman, printing office." Thomas J. is probably our man. He was still working for the *Record* in 1876 as a pressman and also for E. E. Ames as salesman. In another Sacramento directory he and a man named John N. Larkin advertised themselves as "book and job printers." It seems clear that printing was his role in the Achilles book.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Faber's Pencils, Excelsior Papers,
Mabie, Todd & Co.'s Gold Pens, Gillott's Pens.
Dixon Pencils, A. W. Faber's Bands,
Victor Slates, Andrews Slates.

OUR PRICES ARE AS LOW AS THE LOWEST.

I was able to confirm the existence in 1878 of the Houghton bookstore in Sacramento, (but no connection to the Houghton family in Utah, whom I'll mention in the next chapter). They probably had no role but to sell the book.

Edwin Francis Bean was born in Brownfield, Maine, just over the border from Vermont, on October 23, 1834 to General Daniel Bean and Ruhamah Bangs. He was the ninth of eleven children. His father was commander of the 2nd Brigade, 6th Division of the Maine Militia.

Edwin married Marantha Mulloy in Brownfield in 1858 and worked with his brothers in a general merchandising store. Evidently having left Marantha to follow him later, E.F. Bean was registered in the 1860 census in Nevada City, California as a miner, living with two other men from Vermont. Nevada City is located about 60 miles northeast of Sacramento, just 15 miles north of present highway I-80. He was the postmaster in Nevada City in 1860-61 and in 1863 he served as paymaster with the rank of Major in the California Militia.[107] In the spring of 1864 Judge O. P. Stidger, who had previously managed a newspaper in nearby Bridgeport, and I. J. Rolfe established a newspaper in Nevada City named the *Daily Gazette.* By November, 1866, Edwin Bean had accumulated enough capital to buy the *Gazette*, which he subsequently edited and published.

In 1867 Bean produced *Bean's History and Directory of Nevada County, California*,[108] a much-referenced contribution to California's mining history which was printed at the *Daily Gazette.* The book was an ambitious undertaking of over 400 pages, "containing a complete history of the county, with sketches of the various towns and mining camps, the names and occupation of residents; also, full statistics of mining and all other industrial resources." The directory was apparently financed through many pages of full page adds. It was compiled by Bean, but the historical writing was produced by at least seven additional authors, each of whom wrote the history of his own town. Bean composed the history of Nevada City as well as that of several other towns for whom he presumably could not recruit writers.

REMEMBER THAT THE ONE-PRICE DRY GOODS STORE IS KEPT BY A. GOLDSMITH.

154 NEVADA TOWNSHIP DIRECTORY.

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—AND—

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EDWIN F. BEAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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PEOPLE ASK, "WHERE SHALL WE BUY CLOTHING?" AT BANNER BROTHERS, OF COURSE.

Bean's own advertisement

I have read all of Bean's writing in that book, hoping to compare his writing style to Achilles'. In fact, there are similarities. Both are written in the plural first person "we." The text of both books is sprinkled gratuitously with italicized and untranslated foreign phrases, such as *nil nisi bonum, sui generis, bona fide, en route, extremis mortis, foci, and savant.* Bean's history is full of frontier excitement such as the killing of a sheriff and deputy, Indian alarms, robbers of banks, and various homicides described in great detail. One difference is that the Nevada County book promotes no clear political or social agenda. And of course, much of the

[107] He was in the 4th Brigade of California Volunteers under Brigadier General James Collins.

[108] This can be read online on Google Books .

content consists of factual descriptions of political officers, elections, mining, and the development of roads and ditches. It was in the chapter describing the history Nevada City that I sensed a strong resemblance to parts of Achilles' work, which is similarly uneven in style from chapter to chapter, but I found no "smoking gun" to prove the same authorship, which could not also be explained by the general writing style of the era.

Edwin and Marantha Bean had moved to San Francisco by 1870 at the time of the census, wherein he declared his occupation as advertising editor. A San Francisco directory in 1872 listed E. F. Bean and Company, Ad. Agency. It listed him in 1873 as a publisher, and then in 1875 he was actually employed by the San Francisco directory as a salesman, an echo of his work in Virginia City. In the San Francisco directories for 1877 and 1878 he was registered as a deputy U.S. marshal.

Of the 26 people arriving in Oakland on July 13, 1877 by rail, Sumner Howard was the only passenger from Utah.[109] My original theory was that the Territorial Attorney from Utah came to California with a subpoena for Samuel and then had him arrested and brought to Utah with the aid of a California based-U.S. deputy marshal. I assumed that Edwin Bean had been the one to accompany Samuel to Utah and back, which would explain how they came to be collaborators on a book.

But, alas, my theory could not be confirmed when closely examined.

The Oakland newspaper which noted Howard's arrival carried no notice on departing passengers, but the report in Utah of Samuel's arrival in Salt Lake City with Howard made no mention of a deputy marshal traveling with them from California. Samuel spent a week in Salt Lake City before giving his testimony to the grand jury in Ogden. Although a deputy reportedly accompanied Samuel to Ogden, when Samuel departed on the train for California, that deputy was said to have remained in Ogden, which suggests that he may have been a Utah marshal. So it is possible that Samuel came and went voluntarily. If he and Bean collaborated on the Achilles book, it may not have happened on that train trip, but it would have been sometime in the ensuing six months. Bean continued to live in the San Francisco Bay area until long after Achilles' book was published, but I have not been able to determine Samuel's whereabouts during that interval.

By 1879 Edwin Bean had changed profession again, working as a deputy collector for the U.S. Internal Revenue Service through 1885. He was listed as a publisher in 1886 and as manager of the Railroad Gazetteer. His wife Marantha died of cancer at the age of 54 in 1890 in Alameda County. By 1900, Edwin had retired to a farm in Fresno. He died in 1904 when he was 70.

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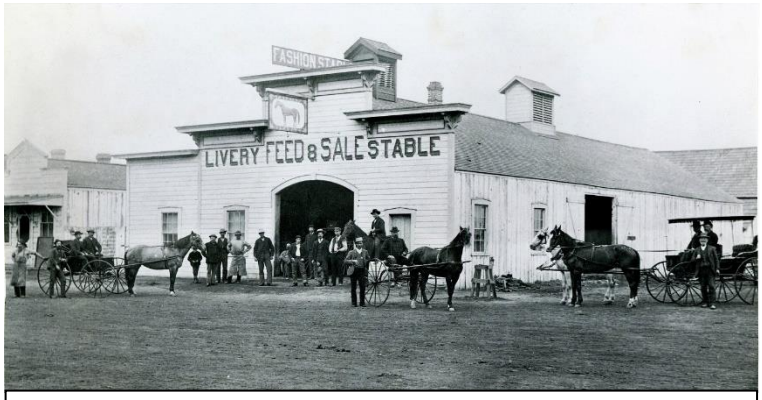
[109] *San Francisco Examiner,* July 14, 1877.

CHAPTER FOUR – AFTER ACHILLES

I don't know where Samuel Sirrine lived between September, 1876, when he was an assayer in Bakersfield and April 24, 1879, when he was working in Lompoc, Santa Barbara County as a miner. Perhaps his absence from the California directories during that time is evidence that he was indeed living under another name. These two towns are about 150 miles apart, and the only commonality that I can imagine is the mining. There were no mines in either one, but they both supported the industry.



Undated photo of Lompoc

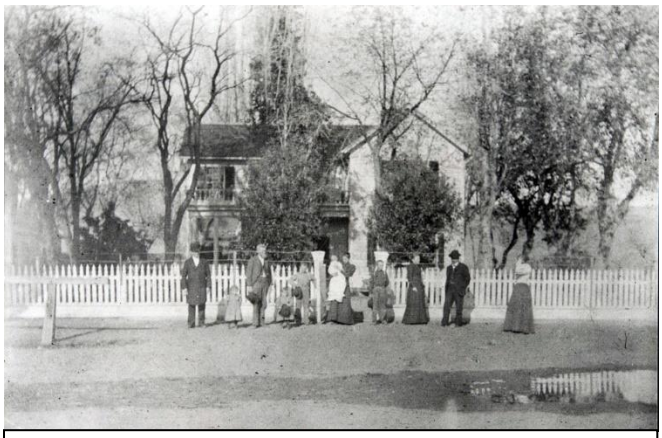
Lompoc had been established five years earlier by W. W. Broughton, a teetotaler, as a temperance colony in 1874, unluckily situated right on the stage line between the "wicked" cities of Santa Barbara and San Louis Obispo where the Santa Ynez River enters the Pacific Ocean. The area had been a Spanish settlement for nearly 100 years. In 1879 it featured wharves and a significant shipping industry. Although liquor often found its way into town with the stagecoach traffic, axe-wielding women regularly destroyed contraband bottles in raids. It was still a "dry" town while Samuel was there, but temperance ended in 1888 when the town was incorporated. But by then Samuel was long gone.

The 1880 census, which measured the population on June 18th, shows Samuel Sirrine in Paskenta Township near Corning in the upper Central Valley of California. He gave his occupation as a mechanical engineer. The township is very large, occupying about a third of Tehama County, and much of it is an Indian reservation. Samuel's next door neighbor in Paskenta, Francis (Frank) Houghton[110] [111]was born to a Mormon family in Missouri, crossed the plains as a teenager with his family, and settled in Spanish Fork, Utah before setting out on his own for California as an 18 year old teamster, where he worked his way

[110] I could find no relationship to W. A. and. C. S. Houghton who owned the bookstore in Sacramento which introduced Achilles' book.

[111] Photo from Tehama County Library, "Francis Houghton Ranch House," *Tehama County Historical Photograph Collections*, accessed December 14, 2020. link

up from laborer in a dairy farm near Sacramento to wealthy rancher in Tehama County. He owned vast amounts of grazing land and had a household of 20 people including Chinese cooks, his own blacksmith, herders, and his younger brother Edgar and his wife, who only stayed a few more years before returning with their young daughter to Utah. It is tempting to think that the Utah connection may have influenced Samuel's move from the Santa Barbara area, but I could find no evidence of it.



Frank Houghton and family 1904

Tahoma Fire Engine

Samuel was boarding with Randolph Hurlburt, a 24 year old farmer, who had moved there from his family home in nearby Lassen County two years earlier with a young wife and daughter. Other members of the Hurlburt household were Ross J. Smith, a 50 year old blacksmith from New York, Edward Long, a 38 year old laborer from, Ireland, and Alfred Prator from Folsom, who was 23 years old and listed his occupation as a fireman. Prator lived the rest of his life in the area, later becoming the marshal in Corning. The Hurlburt house was probably not far west of the actual town of Corning, where Samuel appeared a month later in the voter register. There would have been limited opportunities for a mechanical engineer in the township, which consisted chiefly of cattle and sheep operations, but the town of Corning offered more. In those days engineers actually worked on engines, especially steam engines, which were used in mining, and also on fire wagon water pumps, which may explain Samuel's relationship to Alfred Prator, the fireman. Corning was the site of one of the few ferries across that part of the Sacramento River at Vina where the Lassen Cutoff of the California-Oregon trail came to an end. For about eight months of the year steamboats labored up the river past Corning to Red Bluff, the last navigable stretch, and a Central Pacific Railway line also ran along the river, both which would have produced opportunities for a mechanical engineer.

Los Alamos Stage Stop

Sometime between July, 1880 and April, 1887 Samuel moved to Los Alamos, which means "the cottonwoods." It was a smaller town about 19 miles east of his earlier home in Lompoc. When California was still part of Mexico Jose Antonio de la Guerra was granted the almost 49,000-acre Rancho Los Alamos in 1839, which served as the hideout for Salomon Pico, the famous "Zorro" of the 1840s. The U.S. Government patented the land in 1872 for ranching. When the stagecoach route was changed two years earlier a stop had been established, which featured a coach stable and dining establishment. The town arose in 1876 when two ranchers sensed an opportunity and each donated land around the stop, laying out streets and blocks to build a successful town. By 1877, Los Alamos sported a blacksmith shop, post office, two saloons, a butcher shop, flour mill, and restaurant. It received another boost in 1882 when the Pacific Coast Railroad ran a narrow gauge track nearby, and the population reached its high of 450 people in 1883. However, the railroad route changed after that and Los Alamos lost importance.

San Francisco Fire Chief David Skannell

On January 29, 1887 the Mexican War Pension Law went into effect long after its first proposal in 1874. The process had been lengthy and complicated because of the many Civil War veterans who had also fought in Mexico--Confederate veterans were excluded. The new law eventually caught the attention of Samuel, who made a trip to San Francisco in April, 1888 to apply for his pension. He had to hire a law firm to help him, which generated a file of records on his past that have been essential to my general research for this book. Part of his task was to get affidavits from two fellow veterans of the New York Volunteers First Regiment to vouch for him. One was a private named David W. Skeairy (a.k.a. Cary) whom I was unable to further identify. The other witness was a captain in the New York Regiment, David Scannell, who had been mentioned in the official report of their senior officer, Colonel Ward Burnett for valor in the Mexican War and was currently

serving as the chief of the San Francisco Fire Department. What stories he could have told of the great San Francisco fires on his watch.[112]

Samuel was still living in Los Alamos at the end of 1892, when the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported a story about a petrified sycamore limb that he had found. He appeared in several Los Alamos town directories after 1888, each time reporting his occupation as a painter. I would like to think that this meant he was an artist, not a painter of buildings--after all Los Alamos was and remains an attractive tourist town which could conceivably have supported a painter of landscapes or portraits. The voter rolls for 1892 in Los Alamos described him as 5'-10 ½" with a light complexion, blue eyes, and gray hair. It turned out that finishing his pension application was not the same as receiving the money. It would not be until January 22, 1895 that he was finally determined by Commissioner of Pensions to have been discharged from the Mexican War on June 29, 1848, nearly 47 years earlier. Samuel was by then 70 years old.

The 1896 voter rolls of Napa County, California show Samuel as an "inmate" of the Veterans' Home in Yountville, still designating himself a painter. He was receiving his veteran's pay, probably backdated, and living comfortably. The word "inmate" is misleading. The Veterans' Home was a great place to live.

General Winfield Scott, one of the heroes of the Mexican War, had $118,000 in leftover proceeds from assessments on Mexican towns and captured tobacco, which he used to found the first government home for disabled and elderly Army veterans in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. After the Mexican War Pension Act, additional soldiers' homes were developed across several states. The Napa Valley version was opened April 1, 1884 with an eleven-

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[112] Here's his bio from findagrave: San Francisco Sheriff, Fire Chief. A native of New York, Scannell was a member of the New York City volunteer fire department before volunteering for military service with the coming of the Mexican War. Commissioned a Lieutenant with the 1st New York Volunteer Infantry, he went on to serve with distinction in several battles in Mexico and was discharged at the rank of Captain at war's end. After moving to California and settling in San Francisco in 1851, he joined the San Francisco volunteer fire department and in 1853 he was appointed Undersheriff of San Francisco. He was soon elected Sheriff, serving from 1855 until 1856; however his term would be tarnished after he was forced to surrender the prisoners Charles Cora and James Casey to the San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856 to be lynched. In 1860 he was elected Chief Engineer of the volunteer fire department, a post he held until the creation of a paid fire department. With the coming of the Civil War, he was called upon by Col. Jonathan Drake Stevenson to organize an armed force out of the fire department to guard against a rumored secessionist takeover of San Francisco in 1861. In 1871 he was appointed Chief of the San Francisco Fire Department, serving until his death at the age of 73. Originally buried in the firefighter's plot at San Francisco's Laurel Hill Cemetery, he was later moved to Cypress Lawn Memorial Park in Colma following the eviction of cemeteries from San Francisco city limits and reburied unmarked in the Laurel Hill Mound.

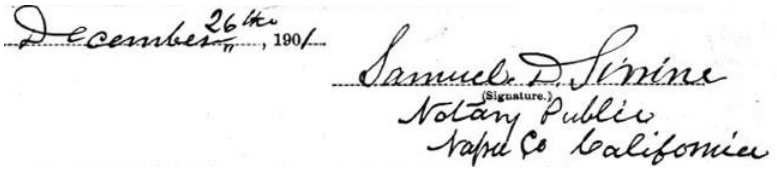
member board of veterans from the Mexican and Civil Wars and 17 residents, but by 1891 it was home to 408 men. By 1896 the federal government withdrew financial support and the home was taken over by the government of California. By the time that Samuel arrived, the Veterans Home had 55 buildings, dairy, hog, and chicken farms, and about 300 veterans living there.[113]

On May 4, 1897 the *Sacramento Record-Union* reported that Samuel had been appointed by Governor Budd to be a notary public for Yountville, Napa County. In November, 1898 the *St. Helena Star* noted that he was running as an Independent for Justice of the Peace in Yount Township.

On June 15, 1899 Samuel married for the fourth time. His new wife was Mary L. Miller.[114] An article printed in the paper the next day describes Samuel as

> ...the well-known Hospital Sergeant of the Veterans' Home. Mrs. Mary L. Walker is a nurse at the Home, the widow of the late John Walker, who died at the home in 1898. He was one of the founders of the *San Francisco Argus*, and a writer of great ability. The groom is one of the most prominent men at the Veterans Home."

Samuel was 74 and Mary was 50.


December 26th, 1901
Samuel D. Sirrine
(Signature.)
Notary Public
Napa Co California

In December, 1901 Samuel was required to fill out a form for the Bureau of Pensions, which gave me my only opportunity to see his handwriting and signature. He reported that he was living at the Veteran's Home in Napa County and that he was married to Mary L. Sirrine, maiden name Miller, widow of William A. Walker. He named Cate Titus as his previous wife, and their son Charles M. Sirrine. He did not mention his wives Emily and Mary Ellen Woodmansee nor any of his

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[113] The Yountville Veterans' Home is now the largest in the United States, currently housing 1,200 veterans. Its services include domicile (independent living), residential care for elderly, intermediate and skilled nursing care, adult day care, and an outpatient clinic. Its Lincoln Theater seats 1,214 and is home to the Napa Symphony. The complex offers a nine-hole golf course, baseball, bowling, and swimming. It has its own post office and a military Base Exchange store. There is also a fitness center, resident-operated TV station, auto hobby shop, a 35,000 volume library, and a chapel. The cemetery contains 5,500 graves of veterans and spouses including Samuel D. Sirrine's.

[114] The ceremony was performed in Napa City by George E. Caldwell, J.P. A witness to the marriage was Lucy Ann Caldwell, wife of a local lawyer (one week after he was attacked by the husband of one of his clients with a cane.) The other witness was Martin J. Wittlinger, who married Miss Lillian I. Peck in September 1899. (She died at age 34 in Sept 1909 of rheumatoid arthritis complications.) Martin was a reporter and linotype operator for the Napa Register for 14 years.

Utah children. Evidently he did not consider them legal marriages or was hiding them. He notarized the document himself.

A month later he was granted an increase to his pension of $12 per month.

Samuel died on Christmas Eve, 1904 and was buried in the Napa Veterans' Cemetery. His death was reported in the Philipstown, New York newspaper.

> Mr. Samuel D. Sirrine, a brother of the late Mrs. Chas Mead, died in the Veteran's Home hospital, Yountville, Cal. Saturday, December 24, 1904. The cause of death was an injury to the spine, the result of a fall. He was buried with military honors Monday, December 26, in the veteran's cemetery at that place....He is survived by a wife, one son, and one brother.

The surviving wife was, of course, Mary Miller, the nurse at the Veterans' Home in Yountville, who must have been the one to inform the paper of Samuel's passing. Mary lived 12 more years before she died in Napa Valley at the age of 67. Although she had been married twice before, she never had children. But Samuel had a lot more survivors than the obituary reported. Evidently Mary Miller didn't mention the polygamous wives.[115]

Samuel's first wife, Catherine (Cate) Titus Sirrine Wilson, had died almost a year before him in Dundee, New York, 30 miles west of Trumansburg and was buried beside her second husband, George Wilson. She had lived alone for 24 years after Samuel left her. Wilson had died six years before her. The son mentioned in the obituary was Charles M. Sirrine, the 51 year old child of Cate and Samuel, who was living with Cate when she died at the age of 74 and was working as a traveling liquor dealer. By 1910 Charles M. had moved to Meadville, Pennsylvania, where he ran a cigar store until he died of cirrhosis in 1921.

The surviving brother reported in the obituary must have been an error. As far as I know Samuel's siblings had all died by then.

I assume that Samuel's Utah wives had long before that time lost track of Samuel and were unaware of his passing.

Emily Woodmansee Sirrine, his first wife in Utah, was 70 years old when Samuel died. Her relationship with Samuel seems mostly to have been a rocky one. When they had been married only five years, he married her sister Mary Ellen, who had been in their household ever since their marriage. Emily divorced Samuel four years after that in 1870, but moved

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[115] Surely she had known about them, since her attorney researched them to qualify her for Samuel's widow's pension. See the document in memories in FamilySearch.

back in with him to have two more children. I don't know whether they ever had contact after he fled to California in May, but she never remarried. In the census and city registries she was always listed as his widow.[116]

Her unhappy experience with marriage seems to have been passed to their children. Their oldest son Samuel F. spent most of his life living with his mother. He married twice, but both marriages were short and without children. He was missing from the 1910 and 1920 census and there is no documentation of his death—I assume he died before 1910, and possibly before his father's death. Their second son Leon was a dentist, but died at the age of 24, leaving a young widow and no children. Of all their children, only Mable, who was born seven months after Samuel's flight from Utah had children of her own. There were four, two of which were born before Samuel's death, but none of them had children, so Emily has no living descendants.

Samuel's second Mormon wife, Mary Ellen Woodmansee Sirrine, had five children, but three died as babies. Two years after Samuel's disappearance, she married Berrill Covington, a much older polygamist. Her daughter Anna May was four and son Orson was two. Both assumed the surname of Covington and had children of their own, so none of Samuel Sirrine's descendants carry his surname. Samuel had three granddaughters through Anna May Covington. One died as an infant. One married and had no children. The third married three times and produced a great granddaughter to Samuel, who lived to old age, but had no children, and a premature grandson who died 44 hours after birth.

Samuel and Mary Ellen's last child, Orson Wood Covington, had two children, Myrell and Merna Mae, before he was divorced from his wife Nellie Wintle and went back to live with his mother, working as a printer. After Mary Ellen died, Orson moved to California and never remarried.

Nellie Wintle

Myrell married three different women, but never had any children.

Merna Mae

All of Samuel's living descendants come through his granddaughter, Merna Mae Covington, a very interesting woman, and her only daughter, Merna Ellen Pardee. Merna Mae was a noted actress in San Francisco, married to Clarence Pardee. She divorced Pardee and sued him for an increase in child support and to drop his surname, reclaiming her maiden name of Covington. She later married two other men including Pardee's brother Robert H. Pardee.

[116] Emily died in Salt Lake City in 1918 at the age of 84.

Busy actress that she was, Merna Mae enlisted her mother Nellie to help raise little Merna Ellen, who also seemed to enjoy a Hollywood lifestyle. At the age of 17, Merna Ellen married 19 year old Daryl David Smedley on Pearl Harbor Day, with whom she had Dennis Lee Smedley, Samuel's first great, great grandchild in 1942, before they divorced. She had a brief marriage to Richard Ollie Crane, a Hollywood actor, which produced a son named Ronald Burke. Around 1947 Merna Ellen married Charles Burke and bore twins: Beverly Ann and Barry Lee. Beverly Ann died at the age of nine. I have not been able to trace Barry Lee. Merna later married Frank Thomas Oakie and John R. Gardner.[117]

Merna Ellen Pardee

R: Ronald Burke (son of Richard Crane), Dennis Lee Smedley, 1952
F: Beverly Ann and Barry Lee Burke

Merna Ellen's first boy, Dennis Lee, married three times, and only had one child that I could discover, named James "Jim" Frederick Smedley, also known as Jim Dowdell. Jim died at age 45 on May 20, 2007, evidently from an accident, for his death invoked a coroner's inquest. His obituary read:

> He was a great loving father, donating a lot of time to Park View Little League. He worked at the B. of A. Data Center in Los Angeles, where he enjoyed his job and the people he worked with. Survived by two daughters Brittany and Sydney, 4 brothers, 4 sisters, and his father, and a host of friends...Jim will be missed and loved always.[118]

Samuel Duncan Sirrine was unlucky in family life, experiencing the deaths of his parents and all ten of his siblings. He outlived eight of his 13 children, witnessing most of their deaths personally. But I think his first three wives had it worse. Not only did they also lose the children, but they suffered abandonment by Samuel. Of the five children who outlived

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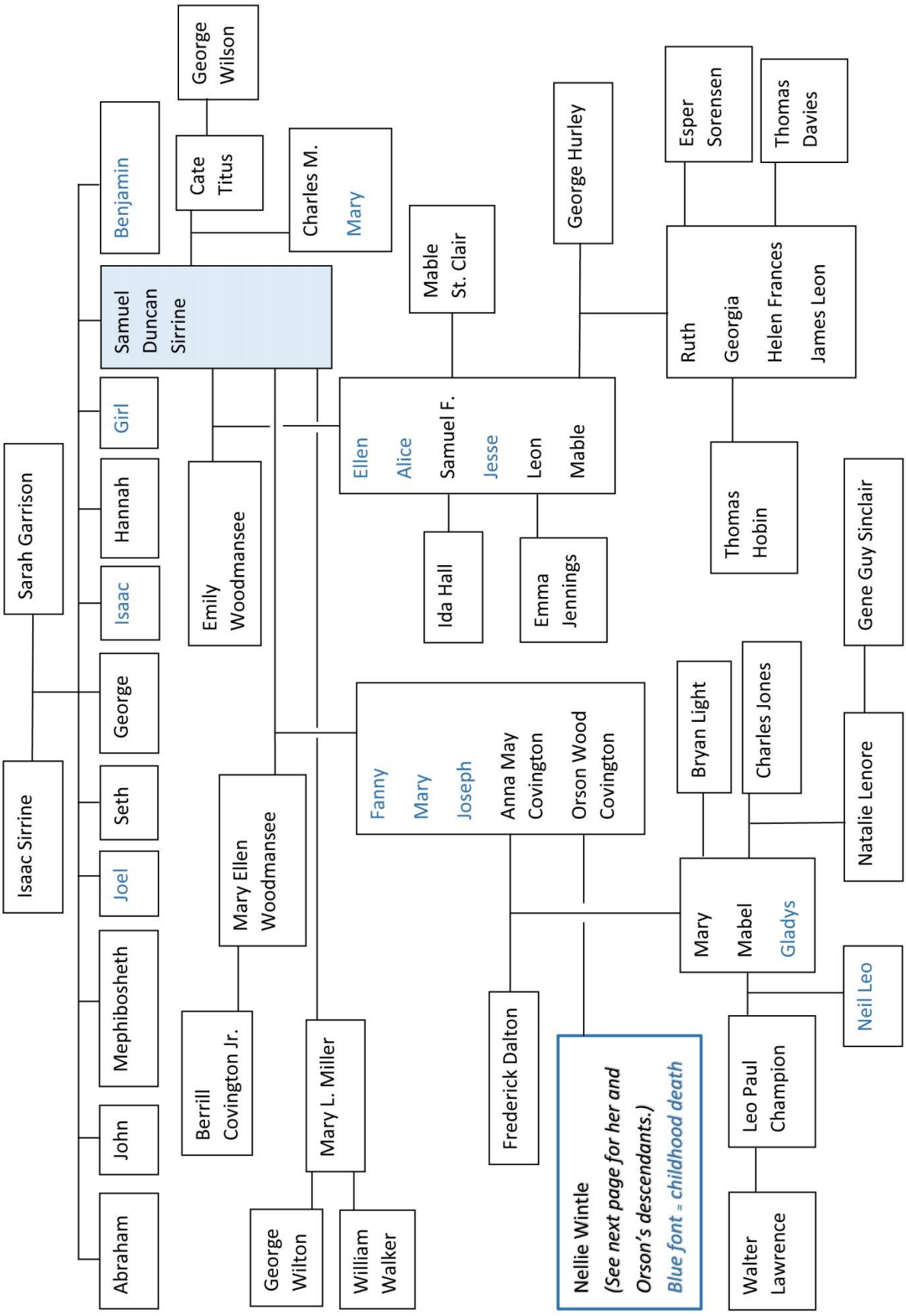
[117] Photos on this page compliments of Ronald Burke.

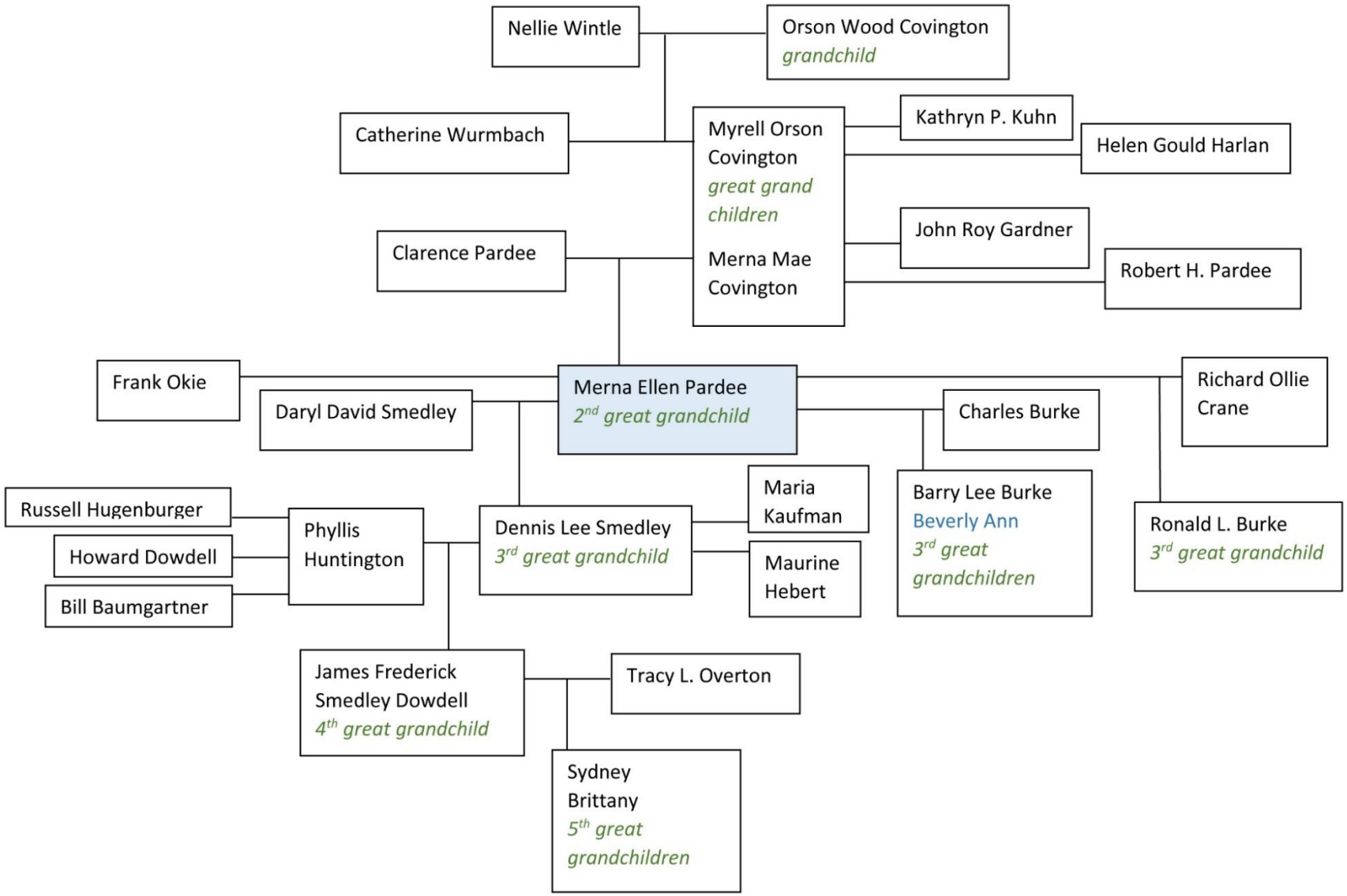
[118] The eight siblings mentioned in Jim's obituary came from his mother's three other husbands. I don't know whether Jim's uncles Ronny and Barry Lee Burke had families, but Samuel Sirrine likely has several living descendants through Merna Ellen Pardee, the only great grandchild to extend his line. I hope to find them and send them a copy of this story of their interesting ancestor.

Samuel, only three had children themselves. Samuel had only four great grandchildren, all of them Covingtons, and only one great, great grandchild. Of his descendants who married, most were divorced and married multiple times.

But Samuel was lucky and rich in experience. He knew war, pioneering, violence, culture, wealth, losses, and notoriety. He seemed to always show up right in the middle of history. It has been an honor to study and attempt to make sense of his story. I wish for so much more, at least a photograph. I imagine that he looked a little like Jim.

Jim Dowdell, Samuel's 3rd great grandson 1942-2011


Isaac Sirrine
Sarah Garrison
Abraham
John
Mephibosheth
Joel
Seth
George
Isaac
Hannah
Girl
Benjamin
Samuel Duncan Sirrine
Cate Titus
George Wilson
Charles M. Mary
Emily Woodmansee
Mary Ellen Woodmansee
Berrill Covington Jr.
George Wilton
Mary L. Miller
William Walker
Ellen
Alice
Samuel F.
Jesse
Leon
Mable
Mable St. Clair
Ida Hall
Emma Jennings
George Hurley
Fanny
Mary
Joseph
Anna May Covington
Orson Wood Covington
Frederick Dalton
Nellie Wintle
(See next page for her and Orson's descendants.)
Blue font = childhood death
Esper Sorensen
Thomas Davies
Ruth
Georgia
Helen Frances
James Leon
Thomas Hobin
Bryan Light
Charles Jones
Mary
Mabel
Gladys
Leo Paul Champion
Walter Lawrence
Natalie Lenore
Gene Guy Sinclair
Neil Leo


Nellie Wintle
Orson Wood Covington
grandchild
Catherine Wurmbach
Myrell Orson Covington
great grand children
Kathryn P. Kuhn
Helen Gould Harlan
Clarence Pardee
Merna Mae Covington
John Roy Gardner
Robert H. Pardee
Frank Okie
Daryl David Smedley
Merna Ellen Pardee
2nd great grandchild
Charles Burke
Richard Ollie Crane
Russell Hugenburger
Howard Dowdell
Bill Baumgartner
Phyllis Huntington
Dennis Lee Smedley
3rd great grandchild
Maria Kaufman
Maurine Hebert
Barry Lee Burke
Beverly Ann
3rd great grandchildren
Ronald L. Burke
3rd great grandchild
James Frederick Smedley Dowdell
4th great grandchild
Tracy L. Overton
Sydney Brittany
5th great grandchildren